

BING

**Spring
2016**

No. 172



THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

*Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the
Guinness Book of World Records*

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby
for the benefit of future generations

Web sites:

Club: www.club-crosby.org

BING magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk

Bing Crosby Enterprises: www.BingCrosby.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Club_Crosby

Honorary President: KATHRYN CROSBY

Honorary Members: Harry Crosby - Mary Crosby Brodka - Nathaniel Crosby - Phillip Crosby Jr.
Mary Carlisle Blakeley - Pat Boone - Rory Burke - Nick Clooney - Michael Feinstein
- Rich Little - Regis Philbin

Special Distribution: Gonzaga University - Hofstra University - Library of Congress - Spokane Public Library -
Tacoma Public Library -

Magazine Editor

MALCOLM MACFARLANE

3 Osborne Close

Wilmslow

Cheshire SK9 2EE, UK

Tel: 01625 528942

e-mail: Macwilmslo@aol.com

Secretary and Treasurer

MICHAEL CRAMPTON

19 Carrholm Crescent

Chapel Allerton

Leeds LS7 2NL, UK

Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556

e-mail: mdcrampton@gmail.com

American Co-Editor

ANTON GARCIA-FERNANDEZ

110 Lakeview Drive

Martin

Tennessee 38237, USA

Tel: (615) 8185159

e-mail: antongarciafdez@gmail.com

American / Canadian Representative

F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS

5608 North 34th Street

Arlington

Virginia 22207, USA

Tel/Fax: (703) 241-5608

e-mail: wigbing2012@gmail.com

Australian / New Zealand Representative

DAVID CURRINGTON

34A Geoffrey Street,

Turrumurra, New South Wales

Australia 2074

Tel: (02) 9440 2434

email: davecurro@tpg.com.au

CONTRIBUTORS

American Contributors: Martin McQuade / John Newton / Maureen Solomon

British Contributors: J. Richard Baker / Ken Crossland / Bob Halls / Keith Parkinson

Canadian Contributor: Gord Atkinson **Australian Contributor:** Graham Pascoe

Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2016 are:

USA and Canada	US \$35 per annum
UK	£20 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£22 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A\$50 per annum
Rest of World	£23 per annum

All remittances should be sent to Michael Crampton in £ sterling payable to *The International Club Crosby* with the exception of::

- (a) American and Canadian members who should send their remittances in U.S. dollars to F. B. Wiggins
- (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material
© Copyright ICC 2016.

EDITORIAL

It is with a heavy heart that I have to announce that I am resigning as Editor of BING magazine after 23 years. It may well be that this will be my last issue but if a replacement cannot quickly be found I have undertaken to carry on until the end of the year as all of you have only just paid your dues / subscriptions for 2016.

I have felt for some time that ideally we needed a younger man with more expertise in magazine layout and journalism. This is an independent fan magazine prepared in their own time by unpaid volunteers (who love Bing) for our professional printer and we know that we are not the *New York Times* but we do our best. I am sure that I have made many mistakes along the way but generally I have really enjoyed my time as Editor. However a fresh approach is needed now

In recent years the relationship between the club and the Crosby family organisation has not been as good as it should be. Clearly this cannot continue as it is essential that all of us who love Bing should work together. When Bing was alive we had a good relationship with him and it is only a few years since Mary Crosby sent us a lovely tape message thanking us for keeping the flag flying since Bing's passing. We must return to the harmonious situation that used to prevail and I hope that my successor will be able to succeed as we look forward to continuing the club's efforts on Bing's behalf.

I am very happy to help out if needed in the future and I want to particularly thank Greg and all of you for your contributions and your kind words over the years.

This issue has a wide range of articles plus details of a forthcoming book about Bing by his son, Nathaniel and two new Crosby CDs. Also most importantly we now have Crosby Internet Radio available for us 24/7! It's great to wander round the house with Bing's radio shows booming out of my iPad.

Now, over to Greg who also has something important to say.

Malcolm Macfarlane

macwilmslo@aol.com

Change is inevitable. It's also hard to accept, regardless if it's by choice or if it is made for you. However sometimes it can be a positive thing, bringing a new beginning, and a fresh start. Perhaps now, as the Club begins its 80th year, and with this being the first issue of BING for 2016, it may be the most opportune time for a different approach to the magazine.

As Malcolm mentioned, none of us are professional writers, nor are we professional magazine editors. We are devotees of Bing Crosby and the incredible body of work he left behind. We all donate our time and resources to this publication. We don't do this for glory, but because we love Bing, plain and simple.



I've enjoyed immensely the 12 years I've served as Co-Editor of this magazine, in addition to the previous 12 years I devoted to BINGANG magazine prior to my tenure here. During that time, I hope that you may have found a few of my submissions of interest or amusing as well.

Therefore, with much consideration and an equally heavy heart, I've come to the conclusion that it's time for me to resign as your Co-Editor. This issue contains my final article as well as my final editorial. But I'm happy to report that we have a very capable gentleman who has volunteered to take on my role, so it gives me great pleasure to welcome Anton Garcia-Fernandez as my successor beginning with the summer issue. I will be available to Anton as the transition takes place, and I'm happy to offer my help to him in the future if needed.

Malcolm was a huge factor in my decision to take on the Co-Editor role back in 2003. I liked him and I liked working with him. But with his departure, the magazine will no doubt be going in a different direction by whomever assumes his role. Not that that's a bad thing. But it would be beneficial for this transition to start anew, with fresh ideas and people. I shall miss working with the entire ICC team. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to Malcolm for all of his hard work over the years in making my contributions to this magazine look and read as well as they did. As I pass the torch to Anton, I leave with pride at the things we've accomplished, and the great honor it has been for me to serve here.

Greg Van Beek

tvanbeek@execpc.com

CONTENTS

	Page Nos.
Editorial	3
Secretary / Treasurer's Report	4
Seasons	6
Crosby Internet Radio	6
Why Frank and Not Bing?	6
Michael Feinstein sings Bing!	7
Bing Crosby House	7
The Tenth Annual Bing Crosby Film Festival ..	7
Five of the Best	8
'A Celtic Christmas Concert'	8
Crosby get-together in the UK	9
An Amazing Friend	9
The Old Crooner and the Young Rocker	13
John Bassett remembers Ken Barnes	14
Trading Post.	15
Books 'N' Bing	17
Stories from Sound Control	17
Saturday essay: A Christmas epiphany	19
A Meeting with Bing Crosby	19
The Christophers	20
Celluloid Crosby.	22
Hope and Crosby's Road movies	24
"Are You Wearing Old Dreams..."?	27
Bing Crosby and The Dream Factory	27
Follow the Sun	27
Bing and Elvis – Christmas 1957	28
Do You Hear What I Hear	30
"Say It with Music" (and Words!)	32
One Sweet Letter from You... ..	34
A Note from Australia	36
Ken Crossland's "Crosbyana"	38
Bing on the Box.	40
Once in a While	44
Gord Atkinson's 'The Crosby Years'	45
The Way We Were	46
Keeping Track..	49

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

All members will be extremely sorry to learn that Malcolm and Greg are resigning their posts as co-editors after 23 and 12 years respectively of dedicated service to the ICC.

Your club officers believe that there is now an **urgent** need to establish a succession plan such that there will be a team of dedicated enthusiasts available to take on the duties of club officers as and when the need arises and thus ensure the long term future of the club.

We are therefore appealing to members to come forward and offer their services indicating which posts they would prefer to take on. Anyone volunteering their



services will be supported in any role they wish to assume until they are confident that they can act independently on behalf of members. We are delighted to welcome Anton Garcia-Fernandez as American Co-Editor and our urgent priority is to find a new editor to replace Malcolm who will be given full support by Malcolm to establish themselves in the post.

A positive and enthusiastic response to our appeal is what we hope members will provide and in so doing these volunteers will help ensure the continuance of the world's oldest fan club. **Please members, come forward and give your support.**

I want to make it abundantly clear that the ICC and its officers support Bing's family in their endeavours to honour Bing's legacy. We believe the family can be justly proud of their work in recent years despite the world no longer being exposed to our favourite type of music.

My report is of necessity being compiled in early January so I cannot give a full picture of members' reaction to the increase in subscriptions but early signs are that members are being very supportive and that many have included welcome additional donations. Wig reports a similar positive response for the US and Canada and I will bring members up to date in the summer issue.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new member with a wish that he will derive much interest and enjoyment from his membership of the club.

UNITED KINGDOM

Christopher Wright (Mill Hill, London)

DONATIONS

The ICC continues to be very fortunate in having generous benefactors who consistently support the club with their financial contributions and we are delighted to acknowledge further very generous donations from - Paul Hennessey, Frank Startup, John Salisbury, Geoff White, Roger Addey, Mr S P Smith, Ken Heason, Matthew Sprott, Ian Patience, John Davis, Klaus Halm, Dennis Saville, John Byrd, Peter Long, Mervyn J Thomas, Michael Winspear, Frank Thompson, Lew Grassby, Geoffrey L Robinson, George Patmore, Mike Donaghue, Mike Mansley, Malcolm Heywood, Barbara Holmes, Tom Sim, Peter Jeffrey, Jim Reilly, Alfred Perry, Stan Woodford, Chris Simmonds, Doreen C Hubbard, Michael J Reynolds, John Stiles, Charles Wilkinson, Ana Monaghan, Tom Maher, Lars Schinnerling, Trevor Wagstaff and Michael Portley.

Donations from the United States, Canada and Australia members will be shown in the summer issue. To all who give additional and generous gifts to the ICC we extend our sincere thanks.

DEATHS

Sadly, we have learned of the deaths of:-

Professor John Norris-Wood, aged 84 (Wadhurst, East Sussex), Frank Brannigan (Malahide, Dublin), George Smith, aged 94 (Keighley, West Yorkshire), Norman S Carter, aged 85 (Westerfield, Ipswich), Jean Saville (wife of member Dennis Saville, and a frequent attendee at the Leeds meeting), Leslie Mills (Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire), Trevor Wagstaff, aged 82 (Hornchurch, Essex), Nelkane Benton (Los Angeles) and Scott Hughes (Oakland, California – Greg Van Beek has penned a separate tribute)

It is always sad to report the death of any member but for me it is particularly so in the case of **George Smith** with whom I spent many hundreds of hours listening to and discussing the merits of Bing's musical talents. George had a near perfect memory for Bing's song lyrics and he even anticipated the digital revolution often saying that someday we would have all of Bing's music in a small box. George was a highly skilled engineer, husband, father and grandfather and he will be sorely missed by his friends and family.

Trevor Wagstaff was a truly supportive member of the ICC and he never passed up an opportunity to gain publicity for the club and Bing. His many letters to organisations such as Guinness World Records and to many radio presenters helped ensure that Bing was not forgotten. Trevor contributed funds to help others and he willingly gave up some of his 78 collection to assist others complete theirs. Latterly Trevor ensured the continuance of "Tape Crosby" an enthusiasts' tape that has been circulating since 1957 but will probably close down now. He will be mourned by a host of friends with whom he shared his love of Bing. Trevor was a lovely man, kind, helpful and we will miss him.

Frank Brannigan was a proud irrepressible Irishman whose love of Bing's musical talents was ever present when you were in Frank's company. It was a privilege for me to have met Frank and to have shared some magic moments with him discussing Bing's life and recordings. Frank was one of those who had the great pleasure of dining with Kathryn Crosby at Brown's Hotel in London in 1999.

Professor John-Norris Wood was a distinguished natural history illustrator and an impassioned conservationist with a deep love of the English countryside. In 1980 he became a fellow of the Royal College of Art and a professor in 1997. John was an enthusiast for jazz and he loved Louis Armstrong and Bing Crosby with a passion. When Bing visited Paris in the early fifties, John and a friend tracked Bing down at his hotel and pretended to be reporters. Bing knew that they were no such thing, laughed and then said "Get in the car boys, I'll give you an interview." And so off they went round Paris.

Nelkane Benton was featured in BING #150 (winter 2008) and her lovely story of how she came to work as a record promoter for Bing Crosby Enterprises for a dozen years or so was told. She went on to run KABC-AM's Ombudsman Service, rising to become Community Relations Director for KABC-AM, and its sister stations KLOS-FM and Radio Disney. She was well known for her 'Spotlight on the Community' broadcasts, and she organized numerous pet adoption parties, Red Cross blood drives, gift-giving drives for service members, food banks for veterans, and scholarships for youth in foster care—to name only a few. Her work won several National Association of Broadcasters Crystal awards for Community Service, and the Service to America Radio Partnership Award.

Our sincere condolences go to Margaret, Pat and

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st DECEMBER 2015

<u>Income</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>£</u>
Subscriptions	6471	Production of BING magazine	11250
Donations	2230	AGM (Leeds) costs	963
		Secretarial costs	209
Leeds meeting - receipts	1576	CDs - costs	1463
Sales – Books / back issues	56	Editorial costs	4
Sales – CDs	2140	Postage – books/back issues	19
		Refunded cheques	15
		ICC web page	86
Bank balance 31/12/2014	<u>13116</u>	Bank balance 31/12/2015	<u>11580</u>
	<u>25589</u>		<u>25589</u>

Note:

1. The accounts are a simple unaudited Income and Expenditure summary. Amounts owing and stocks of books and CDs held are not shown. Funds held on a temporary basis by the various international representatives are not shown either.
2. The club is able to cover its anticipated expenditure in 2016.

Michael Crampton. Secretary/Treasurer

Bernie - George, Trevor and Frank's wives respectively - and to the family and friends of Nelkane, Scott, Jean, John, Norman and Leslie.

BING CROSBY ON CD

This is my usual reminder that the following CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.50, Europe £9.50 and the rest of the world £10.50. Members in the US & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 2, 4, 8, 9 and 10

BING CROSBY in the Hall – Rare Live Recordings from KMH 1937 – 1946

BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors

THE ROAD TO HONG KONG – SAY ONE FOR ME
BING CROSBY ENTERTAINS – FOR WOODBURY SOAP

BING CROSBY - Kraft Music Hall 1935 – 1936

Until summer, my warmest greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton

mdcrampton@gmail.com

Seasons

In our last issue, Greg quoted from some private emails that he had received from Ken Barnes. Some of the information in these e-mails is not accurate. In fact Bing Crosby Enterprises, using the mix on their two-track master tape that had been used to make the original LP, remastered the *Seasons* album and did not remix it for the 2010 reissue. The remix undertaken by Ken Barnes was not used. Ken's assertion that he had not had a response from Robert Bader regarding the remix was also inaccurate. Ken was involved in extensive discussions with everyone in the Crosby office about the remix of *Seasons* and the reissue of the album. In addition, Ken had said that he had not been given a copy of the *Seasons* CD. In fact a nice note from Kathryn Crosby was dispatched along with five copies of the CD but unfortunately this was never received.

We offer our sincere apologies to Robert Bader and everyone at Bing Crosby Enterprises.

Crosby Internet Radio

On January 15 we received the wonderful news that **Crosby Internet Radio** had been launched and was available for free 24/7 at www.bingcrosby.com. There's a link on the BING magazine web site too in the News section. Your editor publicized this widely and feedback from members was excellent. Items such as the Crosby-

Clooney Shows, the 15-minute Bing Crosby Shows (many of which we had never heard before), plus Command Performance, Mail Call, KMH, Philco, Chesterfield and GE shows are being broadcast. Some of the Bing's Basement shows are heard too and the 15-part BBC series about Bing plus John Salisbury's "The Crosby Years" originally broadcast on KXL. Links between shows were by Arne Fogel. This is a fantastic development and a great opportunity to hear many of Bing's radio shows. And what about the commercials? I must get some Instant Postum!

Those of you on the Internet have some superb listening ahead.

Why Frank and Not Bing?

This article by Stanley Fish in BING #171 was sent to me by Kurt Schroeder who said, "While the article describes reasons that Sinatra is now more well-known and more popular than Bing, it certainly speaks of Bing in very admiring terms at the same time."

Lorne Harasen was one who wrote saying, "I trust someone is going to answer Professor Fish!"

Arne Fogel had responded strongly to the article at the time and he wrote direct to the *Huffington Post* page saying, inter alia, "I think the reasons for the phenomenon you are talking about have to do with the fact that Sinatra continued to perform before live audiences and kept in touch with audiences in that way. Crosby stopped doing personal appearances in the 30s. (With a startup again in the 70s, before his death). Also, Sinatra came into his own in the album era, at a time when Bing was cruising into a sort of semi-retirement. His greatest recordings sound fresh and modern today, and Bing's greatest, recorded in an earlier pre-tape technology, are a harder sell."

Fish also wrote "First, the Sinatra legacy is aggressively overseen by his daughters Nancy and Christina Sinatra, who zealously guard and promote his voice and his image. No one, to my knowledge, is doing that for Crosby."

That was Stanley Fish's perception but it is only fair to point out that since 2009 the Crosby family has issued 27 compact discs and five DVDs of material from the Bing Crosby Archive. There was also a newly produced radio series on SiriusXM, a pair of digital albums and two commemorative vinyl singles. Most importantly, there was the superb *American Masters* documentary, *Bing Crosby Rediscovered* and the PBS special *The Legendary Bing Crosby* which crops up most months on the Sky Arts channel in the UK. I understand too that the Crosby estate has been instrumental in getting many of Bing's films issued on DVD by the studios that owned them. The discovery of the lost 1960 World Series kinescope in Bing's film collection gave our man tremendous coverage in the media too including the front page of *The New York Times*.

Michael Feinstein sings Bing!

As we went to press, we heard that our honorary member, Michael Feinstein, was to celebrate Bing on March 18 on the prestigious and long running BBC Radio 2 programme "Friday Night Is Music Night". This is Michael's own initiative rather than a BBC idea.

The pre-show publicity read, inter alia:

On a rare visit to the UK for BBC Radio 2's 'Friday Night Is Music Night', the master interpreter of the Great American Songbook, Michael Feinstein, celebrates 'Bing Crosby and the Crooners' with the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Broadway's Larry Blank. Michael's special guests include jazz singer Clare Teal and Strictly Come Dancing's Lance Ellington... In this concert, Michael Feinstein celebrates Bing's career and remembers his contemporaries: Nat King Cole, Perry Como, Doris Day and Dinah Shore ... Music will include Crosby's greatest hits; Don't Fence Me In; The Road To Morocco; In the Cool Cool Cool of the Evening and many, many, many more! ...

Your editor circulated members by email and put a note on Crosby Fan World but those of you who missed it may still be able to catch it on the BBC's i-player service. Full review in the next issue. Pat and I will be there!

Bing Crosby House

A "White Christmas" Open House was held at the house on December 5 and was a real success. Over 200 people attended and enjoyed the exhibits and free hot cider and cookies. Ther were visitors of all ages. It is intended to hold a third annual White Christmas Open House in December this year.



Visitors inspect the many items on display.

Alex Westby, who has been managing the Facebook page for Bing Crosby House has now departed to undertake student teaching and Maggie Thompson-Johnston has taken over from him. Maggie, who is from Anchorage, Alaska, is a senior history major at Gonzaga University with passions for singing, the outdoors, literature, and swing dance. We have offered to help Maggie with any assistance she may need.

The Tenth Annual Bing Crosby Film Festival

The week after the Open House, the annual film festival took place at the Bing Crosby Theater in Spokane. The program was:

11:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. – "White Christmas"

2 p.m. – "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court"

4:30 p.m. – "Holiday Inn"

Musical performance by Howard Crosby at 6:45 p.m.

The local press gave the Festival a good plug with Dan Nailen of *The Inlander* newspaper of Dec 10 saying:

"If I were mayor, every Spokane resident would be required to deliver gifts of golf balls and cardigan sweaters to the statue of Bing Crosby at Gonzaga each Christmas. At the very least, people would have to watch the excellently twisted David Bowie/Bing collaboration on "The Little Drummer Boy" on YouTube every day in December.

Absent such power, all I can do is advocate delving into the annual Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival at the — you guessed it — Bing Crosby Theater. For 10 years, the folks at the nonprofit Bing Crosby Advocates have showcased the crooner's movies at the all-day event that allows people to drop in and catch a Crosby classic or two. This year, in addition to three films, you can hear some live songs by Howard Crosby, Bing's nephew, and take in some rare photos of Bing as well."

The newspaper then went on to describe each film as did *The Spokesman-Review* paper whose Nathan Weinbender opened his article with the following.

"They don't really make movie stars in the mold of Bing Crosby anymore. It's hard to imagine him having a place in today's pop culture landscape: He's maybe a little too nice and too urbane, and the kinds of movies he made haven't been in fashion for decades.

But perhaps that's why audiences keep returning to the Bing Crosby Holiday Film Festival, which is now in its 10th year. It's a day-long festival at Crosby's namesake downtown theater, and it features three Crosby films, a display of Crosby-related memorabilia and a performance by the legendary crooner's nephew Howard Crosby. There's plenty of nostalgia to experience.

Crosby was one of the first musical superstars of the modern era. Although a majority of his work predates traditional *Billboard* charts, he racked up more than 40 No. 1 singles during his career and has sold an estimated 1 billion records. He also had a long and successful movie career, years before the likes of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Elvis Presley transitioned into film. He had significant box office presence in the '40s and '50s and won an acting Oscar for his starring role in 1944's *Going My Way*.

Crosby's star faded a bit in the late '50s, when popular music was usurped by the rebellious energy of rock 'n' roll. But much of his work is still cherished, perhaps because it so perfectly captures the warmth and romance of a specific era. As a screen presence, Crosby was all soft edges and, excluding his dramatic turn alongside Grace Kelly in 1954's *The Country Girl*, always appeared to be the gentle, amiable personification of one of his classic songs."

(Editor: Well said, Mr. Weinbender).

Five of the Best

Los Angeles County Museum of Art's long-running Tuesday matinee series paid homage to Bing in December with five of his greatest films. First up on December 1 was 1956's *High Society*, the glossy musical remake of *The Philadelphia Story* also starring Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra. Next on Dec. 8 was the jazzy 1941 *Birth of the Blues* with Mary Martin. His Christmas classics — 1942's *Holiday Inn* and 1954's *White Christmas* — were on tap for Dec. 15 and 22, respectively. And the series wound down on Dec. 29 with Crosby's Oscar-nominated turn as an alcoholic singer attempting a comeback in 1954's *The Country Girl*, for which Grace Kelly earned the Academy Award as his long-suffering wife.

Howard Crosby, Affinití bring 'A Celtic Christmas Concert' to Richland

Howard Crosby was busy in December on a tour of the Northwest of the USA with a wonderful Irish group called Affinití. Three sold out shows in Portland, plus sold out shows in Walla Walla and the Tri-Cities. They also put on a great show at the Bing Crosby Theater to a very appreciative audience. Naturally, Bing features prominently in Howard's part of the show. The article in the Tri-City Herald on December 2 gave some useful background.

Howard Crosby first heard the Irish trio Affinití a few years back.

Crosby was performing at the National Concert Hall in Dublin as part of the St. Vincent de Paul Society's 200th anniversary celebration, and the group took the stage after him.

"I said, 'I'm so glad we went first,'" he recalled. "They would have been a tough act to follow."

Crosby, from Walla Walla, the nephew of legendary entertainer Bing Crosby, has become a champion of the trio's music — and also a collaborator.

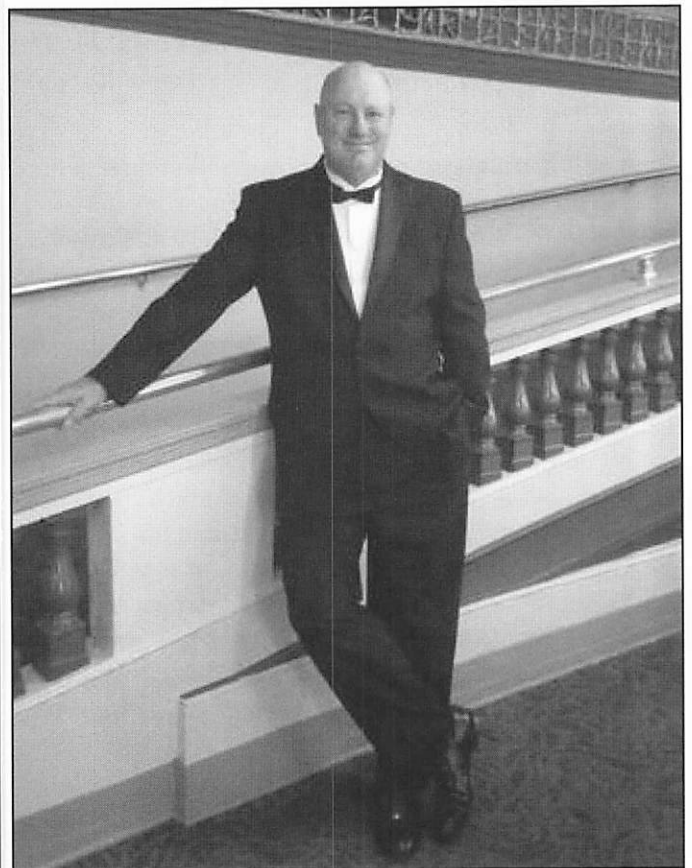
On Dec. 9, he and Affinití will bring *A Celtic Christmas Concert* to the Uptown Theatre in Richland.

The show will raise money for the Arts Center Task Force, which aims to bring a performing arts center to the Mid-Columbia.

Tickets now are sold out.

Affinití includes soprano Emer Barry, Aisling Ennis on harp and Mary McCague on violin. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Kevin Cullen has described the group as "the essence of Irish art ... informed as much by the Chieftains as Chopin, as indebted to Mary Coughlan as to Mary Black and Mary J. Blige, full of soul and sass and sophistication as well as exquisite technique."

Crosby said the trio is fun to watch — full of talent and stage presence.



Howard Crosby prepares to go on stage

They won't be alone in performing. Crosby also will take to the microphone, performing with Affinití and on his own.

One song he is sure to sing is "White Christmas", the beloved tune made famous by his uncle.

"Audiences always want to hear (that song)," Crosby said.

Although he and his Uncle Bing were close, their bond centered more on a love of golf, not music.

Howard Crosby didn't start singing seriously until he was in his 20s, when he tried out for a church choir.

It's now a cherished part of his life. The draw is "the music itself. (My accompanist) and I have as much fun rehearsing in the basement as we do on stage. The music itself is so much fun," Crosby said.

He loves his uncle's canon of American standards. And his voice often is likened to Bing's, although Howard demurs that his uncle is in a league of his own.

"He's a legend. There's never been anyone else like him," Howard Crosby said.

Howard shared a touching story about his uncle and "White Christmas". On the way to a golf course years ago, Howard asked Bing about the toughest moment in his career.

Bing said it was a USO show in France in September 1944. He performed for thousands of GIs, and struggled to keep it together as he sang of yearning for the beauty and simplicity of Christmas' past.

Not long after, many of those same soldiers lost their lives in the Battle of the Bulge.

At the Richland show, Howard Crosby promises a night of good music and holiday cheer.

The women of Affinité are "incredibly talented as performers," Crosby said. "Anyone who comes to the show will have a good time."

Sara Schilling

Crosby get-together in the UK

Member Jason Liddiard would like to hear from you should you be interested in attending regular Crosby get-togethers in the Warrington, Cheshire area in the UK.

The aim of the gatherings is to share our interest in Bing Crosby through discussion, knowledge sharing and, above all, listening to the greatest voice of the 20th Century, thus helping to perpetuate the memory and musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations.

To register your interest, please contact Jason:

Email: jkl@galleryjkl.com

Tel 07739 596 826

Frank Grant auction

Our last issue contained a flyer about a huge auction of the late Frank Grant's Crosby collection taking place on January 9. Despite several attempts, we have not been able to find out how well or otherwise the auction went.



An Amazing Friend ...

Greg Van Beek mourns the loss of a dear friend.

As fate would have it, 2015 has been a year of endings (and new beginnings). A year of change, and a year of loss. The saddest loss of all to me personally has been the loss of a dear friend of over twenty years that most of you have never heard of, yet he had quite a connection to Bing and the Crosby family. His name was Scott Hughes, and he lost a courageous battle with cancer on November 16th, a month shy of his 55th birthday.

Our friendship began with a note he sent me dated February 16, 1993, telling me how much he enjoyed an article I wrote for the December 1992 issue of BINGANG magazine detailing the 1965 to 1977 Crosby Family Christmas specials on television. Scott was looking for a VHS copy of the Merrie Olde Christmas from 1977, and I referred him to the late Bob Lundberg, who was making his collection available to fellow collectors at a nominal cost of the blank tape and postage. That may very well have ended our connection, but Scott wrote back, and a follow up letter, dated March 2nd said "You know, Greg, I went to high school with Nathaniel Crosby. We were friends and I was to the Crosby house in Hillsborough many times (twice for

Christmas dinner!). The "Merrie Olde Christmas" is how I remember Mr. Crosby". Not long after this, the first of many gifts arrived from him...a photo that Bing autographed for him in person at Pebble Beach one January in the mid 1970's. With it a simple note that read "This is the real thing. You may want to keep it away from direct light as it's fading."

It turns out Scott was far more than just a classmate of Nathaniel's. He was a very talented singer and impressionist, taking a lead from his idol Frank Gorshin, whom he first saw on The Ed Sullivan Show in February of 1964...the historic night when Ed welcomed The Beatles to American audiences. Scott wowed the San Francisco Bay area in the 1970's and 80's at The Purple Onion cellar club. Many notable entertainers either got their starts or played the California club in the 1950s and 1960s including Bob Newhart, Lenny Bruce, Woody Allen, Phyllis Diller (making her stand-up debut), Richard Pryor, Maya Angelou, The Kingston Trio, Jim Nabors, and the Smothers Brothers (then a trio)—who recorded their first album, entitled, The Smothers Brothers at the Purple Onion there. He took delight in



phoning me as Ronald Reagan or Clint Eastwood, or Richard Nixon.

So convincing was he with his spot on impressions that one time my father answered the phone when Scott called early on in our friendship, and dad's jaw dropped. He handed me the phone and incredulously said "R-ronald Reagan wants to speak with you". It took a lot of explaining to convince him it wasn't actually the former president on the other end of the line. Scott confessed to me he pulled the same trick on the Crosby family butler, Alan Fisher, back in the mid 1970's, and had Mr. Fisher convinced that John Wayne was calling to speak to Mr. Crosby. Mr. Fisher was furious when Scott let him in on his little joke!



Scott with Bing on a golfing occasion.

Scott was around Bing many times, and they, along with Nathaniel, golfed together several times. "Bing was a good and (most importantly) an experienced golfer. He shot in the mid-80's." Scott said that "Bing was almost always home when I was to the house at Hillsborough. He never wore his toupee at home and unfortunately he didn't look like "Bing Crosby" without it. I suppose this is why I didn't appreciate being in a "movie star's" company at the time. He was usually working (reading, writing, etc.) in his study upstairs or watching TV downstairs."

"One year, he drove us (Nathaniel and Scott) down to the Crosby Tournament at Pebble Beach! I'm sorry I wasn't a fan at the time. There are so many questions I'd have asked! He drove a Rolls Royce Silver Shadow most of the time. After the Patty Hearst kidnapping, he drove a compact Ford so as not to draw attention to himself.

During the drive, not a word was said to us, although Bing would be tuning through the dial on the dashboard radio, singing along constantly with songs he'd run across that he liked, which tended to be the light rock of the time (Carole King type of stuff). He had a great memory for lyrics."

"One year, 1975 or 1976, I received an invitation to a cocktail party at the Clambake at Pebble Beach. This was the year I played in the tournament as an alternate. Rosemary Clooney headlined the show with Bing."

"However, although he was always polite, he was a quiet man when he wasn't in public. And I'm afraid that other than golf and politics, I can't recall many conversations with him. He never mentioned his music or films. And when we were loud or behaving badly, he could seem quite stern. He was a product of the turn of the century values and of very bad economic times. He was no different from my grandfather. Most all men of that age were tough, stern, religious, and unforgiving. I remember that Bing made a point of keeping account of spending cash. However he was loyal if you needed him in a material way. He just found it difficult to show affection or emotion."



The young Nathaniel Crosby with Scott. The note reads: "To Scott, Mom says she'll be sure to have your act stop by this house another Christmas Eve, Best, Nathaniel Crosby."

"I was a guest at the Christmas Eve festivities at Hillsborough twice, once while Bing was present, and once after he died (in 1979). I performed some songs after dinner; I'd sing and Harry would play the guitar. The year I was there while Bing was still alive, he was

"on" that night. Rosemary Clooney and family were there as well as the Hearsts. Bing was magical when he wanted to be. We all sang around the piano. Then I did my impersonations for the group. It was fun, and Bing seemed to like my impressions, but he and I never sang a duet together. What a beautiful, big, massive home. Like in the movie *High Society*! All of Bing's mementoes (records, pictures, etc.) were kept in the attic at Hillsborough. Nathaniel took me up one time and gave me a bunch of stuff. The Tom Sawyer set I sent you came from there". (Scott sent me a promotional copy of the 3 LP set of Bing's reading of Tom Sawyer that was recorded in 1975).

Speaking of Christmas, Scott attended and later performed at the annual show at the Laguna Honda Hospital. Scott was a volunteer there, and said "The show I saw was in 1975 I think and Bing had a small band backing him. It was all very informal. Bing loved those people and, although it was physically difficult for them to show it, those people sure loved him in return!"

On October 6, 1975, Bing and Scott played in the Tom Watson Pro-Am at Stanford University. Several photos were taken of the two of them together that day, including one where Bing is showing Scott an old putter than Bobby Jones had given him. Scott remembered that Bing had fried chicken for lunch, opting to pick up the pieces of chicken and bite the meat off of the bones rather than use a knife and fork. He also remembered that Bing used the same golf ball for the entire 18 holes, and that early in the game, the ball became damaged due to Bing's powerful drive off of the tee. Despite it having a cracked case and a flat spot, Bing continued to use it. After Bing sank the putt on the 18th hole, Scott retrieved the ball as a souvenir and had it mounted on a little plaque together with their photograph. Years later, Scott presented me with this treasure, which I proudly display in my Bing room.

"I didn't play golf with Bing after his accident in Pasadena in March of 1977, but the last time I saw him was in August of that year at the concert in Concord, California. I met him backstage. It was a wonderful show, but the power went out for about 20 minutes. Bing was unfazed. He did a pantomime to entertain the crowd until the sound and lights were back. This was a side of his talent I'd never seen!"

After high school, Scott and Nathaniel drifted apart as their lives took them in different directions. Scott continued on as a successful headliner in the San Francisco Bay area. In addition to his own shows, he opened for the likes of Johnny Mathis, Neil Sedaka, Andy Williams, and many others. In Herb Caen's column in the San Francisco Chronicle dated January 20, 1984, Mr. Caen wrote: "Singer Scott Hughes, the perennial Purple Onion headliner, is back from London, where he entertained the household staff at Kensington Palace, home of the prince and princess of Wales, and scored a smash. The gig was organized by Scott's friend,

Alan Fisher, the one-time Bing Crosby butler who is now Head of Household for Chazz and Di. Last night, Scott began an unprecedented sixth consecutive year at the Onion..."

As Scott wrote me about that amazing experience; "Although I only exchanged pleasantries with Prince Charles and Lady Diana, I did have a full private tour of the family quarters and even helped feed a baby Prince William!"

Scott once mentioned to me that in 1983, when Gary Crosby was making the TV talk show rounds promoting his book, he was on the same AM San Francisco show singing a song. Scott chatted with Gary after the show, and Gary gave him a copy of the book, noting that he "seemed pleasant, but I felt as if he was sort of angry at the whole world". Scott passed that signed copy of Gary's book on to me.

In 1992, he had dinner with Dean Martin's daughter and their dear friend Carol at La Familia Restaurant in Beverly Hills, and Dean himself showed up and joined them. Poor Dean was not doing well by that point and didn't touch his food, yet downed five or six scotches. However, despite Dean's less than ideal condition, Scott remained in awe, and said to me "next to Bing, I loved his singing style better than anyone. He had a wonderful act!"

Not only did he dine with Dean Martin, Scott also had a similar experience with Frank Sinatra! Around 1990, a Hollywood producer from the Bob Newhart show invited him to a cast party at Chasen's in West Hollywood. The cast from the Newhart show was there, along with Don Rickles, Steve & Eydie, the Sinatra family, etc. About 30 people altogether. Scott watched a visibly disgruntled Francis Albert toss a plate of food on the floor because "he didn't like it". Later in the evening, Frank Sinatra and Scott sat alone together at the bar for an hour or so. Frank was still clearly angry, and his choice of crude vocabulary was a good indication of this to Scott. But, at the same time, Scott said Mr. Sinatra was "sort of nice to me and bought all the drinks!"

In April of 1994, the Bohemian Club in San Francisco had a 90th birthday party for Phil Harris, and Scott was there. Phil sang some of his more popular hits like "Bare Necessities" and "That's What I Like About the South", after which Scott sang a tribute to Bing, including "I Surrender, Dear", "Where the Blue of the Night", etc. The next day, Phil, two other gentlemen, and Scott went to the Golden Gate Fields Race track in Oakland, California. Phil told them many funny stories that day, including this gem about Bing: "One day Bing and I were golfing at the Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles. Now Riviera has more sand traps than any other course I've ever played. When we finished the game, a member asked 'How'd you guys play?' I told the guy 'I played great but poor Bing had more bunker time than Eva Braun!' Braun was Adolph Hitler's

longtime companion and later wife.

Later, Scott introduced me to Alan Fisher, and we shared a few letters back and forth, which lead to an article in BINGANG about his experiences with Bing. He told me about the time in March of 1962 when President Kennedy stayed at Bing's Palm Desert home. Mr. Fisher mentioned that he never saw JFK there, but did see Marilyn Monroe. "Someone was delayed picking her up, and I arrived to see things were back in place after the Secret Service people rang and said "we" are leaving now. So I did not expect to see anyone. She was sitting by the pool, reading what I "presume" was a script. She was adorable, funny, and amused by the fact that Bing Crosby had an English butler!"

Scott's generosity to me knew no bounds, and wherever he travelled, postcards, letters and various souvenirs always arrived from those locations. I couldn't begin to list all of the places he'd been and the things he experienced... and shared... with me. Not to mention some of the souvenirs he shouldn't have taken! He attended the funeral services for Presidents Gerald Ford and Ronald Reagan, and, in fact, called me as he watched the funeral procession for President Reagan pass by. I was watching it live on television and getting a simultaneous report from Scott on the phone. Memento Mass cards from both events found their way to my mailbox.

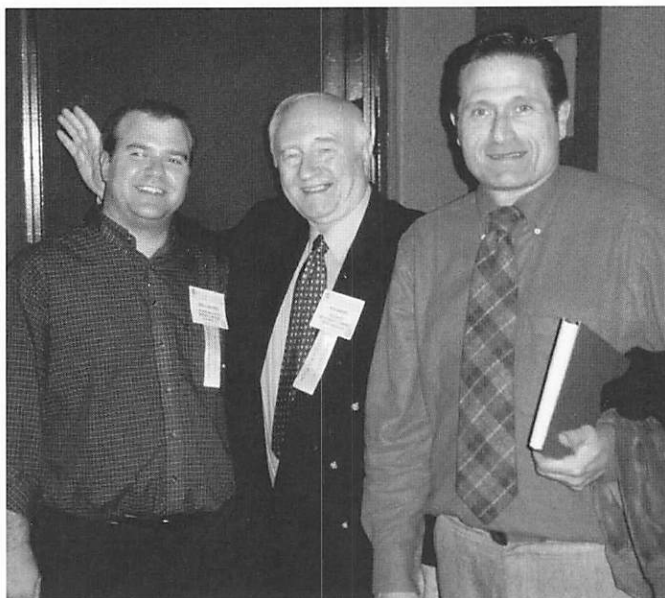
He obtained in person autographs for me from Debbie Reynolds at her hotel in Las Vegas and from Andy Williams in Branson, MO. Jack Jones signed a program for me because of Scott's kindness, just to mention a few of many autographs sent my way. Pictures of Scott visiting the graves of Frank Sinatra and Bob Hope were shared with me, along with a photo of Scott outside suite 1220-1221 at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, with Scott mugging ala Al Jolson. Of course I had informed him that Jolson passed away in that suite in 1950 and he was astonished to learn this, as he always booked that suite whenever he stayed in San Francisco!

We met in person for the first time at Hofstra University at the Bing Crosby Conference in November of 2002, and we shared a delightful visit that Saturday morning in New York before departing. I was able to introduce him to Ken Barnes, which he especially enjoyed, as Ken's book, *The Crosby Years*, was his favorite. Looking at the photo of the three of us together now is bittersweet, because both of them left us within months of one another. I was also able to reunite him with Kathryn Crosby after so many years that had passed since they last saw one another.

Later, he and his longtime friend Carol Bledsoe traveled by car to my home in Wisconsin, and we shared another fantastic afternoon immersed in my Crosby collection, talking about all things Bing. It's these in person memories I cherish most, and only wish we could've shared more of these outings. Carol was by Scott's side for nearly all of his travels, and so many of

the photos and mementos he sent for me were made possible with her camera and due to her help. Carol has subsequently become a dear friend of mine as well, and I'm blessed that we are still in touch to remember all of the good times they shared together....and, in turn, shared with me.

I was able to finally give something back to Scott around 2002 when I arranged for him to meet Frank Sinatra Jr. after a performance in Turlock, CA. This was made possible thanks to the generosity of Charles Pignone, and Scott was delighted to be able to have met Mr. Sinatra, and share his memories of meeting his father with him.



Scott (right) with Ken Barnes and Greg at Hofstra.

Scott and I exchanged Christmas presents each year, and the last gift I sent him in 2014 was a 1946 Crosley table model radio I restored for him. During his health struggles, I learned he took delight in sitting next to that radio and listening to the local stations. I was happy to have been able to bring some comfort to his final months. As I was to learn much later, however, Scott had one final surprise for me. A gift that was both poignant and touching. On December 15th, the doorbell rang and a package was delivered. It was a box of gourmet, fresh from the orchard Harry & David Royal Riviera Pears from Oregon. Scott had been gone 4 weeks, yet even during his final, difficult days, he apparently was still thinking of me, making sure I would receive a Christmas present this year. That's the kind of friend he was. The accompanying card read "Believe in the Season", along with a little inside joke inscription from Scott that had me smiling through tears. That kind gesture could even make Scrooge believe in the season. I now know how George Bailey felt when he opened that book and read the inscription from Clarence.

But out of all of the wonderful gifts he sent me over the years, the greatest gift of all was his friendship. Dear friends like him don't come along too often in your life,

and he was simply the best. So I will conclude my final article for a Bing Crosby fan club publication with a final goodbye to a remarkable man, Scott Hughes. I'm going to miss him forever.

If you'd like to hear a sampling of Scott's talents as an impressionist and vocalist, check out his performance of "American Trilogy" at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FI_3VtyU_6g

Greg Van Beek

The Day the Old Crooner and the Young Rocker Made Christmas Music Together

The death of David Bowie received extraordinary coverage and one article which Greg spotted was by Joseph McAuley in *America – The National Catholic Review* on January 11. This told the story of the famous Bowie 'N Bing meeting and it's well worth reading.

When I woke up this morning to the news that rock legend David Bowie died, I couldn't believe it. This came on the heels of the death of another musical legend, Natalie Cole, daughter of her "unforgettable" father, Nat King Cole. The former David Robert Jones had inhabited the rock universe for some four decades and in that time he managed to make his musical mark across various genres. He had been ill for almost two years, fighting what turned out to be a losing battle with cancer. He was 69 years old when he died, and that particular birthday occurred just last Friday.

Musicians—indeed, everybody who is ever famous—are just as human as the rest of us and they, too, are prone to human faults and frailties. With celebrities, though, you somehow believe that they'll go on forever. We know of course, that isn't the case. But when it happens it is still a shock.

Naturally, all the television reports gave the details of a rocker's life; there is no need to detail that here. But when I heard the news, it brought me back some years to a time when David Bowie once went outside of his "comfort zone" and made musical history with someone who wasn't of his time: Bing Crosby.

The date was Sept. 11, 1977, when Bing Crosby was taping his annual Christmas special for CBS. He was in England in a studio just outside of London. It was the Elstree Studios to be exact and the program he was taping was to be called *Bing Crosby's Merrie Olde Christmas* and it was to be as the title implied: an old-fashioned English Christmas. Bing had the show all planned with his writers; but he wanted something different for this show. He wanted a young person to appear with him. Somehow or other, David Bowie was suggested and feelers were put out for having him appear with Bing on the show. They were both

musicians of note and both were in London and if it were to come off, it could make for an interesting musical paring. One of the show's writers/producers, Alan "Buz" Kohan, was not sure if Der Bingle knew who David Bowie was; but as fellow writer Ian Fraser said at the time, "I'm pretty sure he did. Bing was no idiot. If he didn't his kids sure did."

And Bing's kids surely knew who David Bowie was. The entire Crosby family were there for the show's taping; and when they saw David Bowie and his wife appear, they were almost speechless. As Mary Frances Crosby—Bing's daughter—recalled: "The doors opened and David walked in with his wife. They were both wearing full-length mink coats, they had matching full makeup and their hair was bright red...We were thinking, 'Oh my God.'" And as one of Bing's sons, Nathaniel, recalled: "It almost didn't happen. I think the producers told him to take the lipstick off and take the earring out. It was just incredible to see the contrast." Somehow, David Bowie was persuaded to tone down his "extravagance," for he was in his "Ziggy Stardust" phase. The young rocker made a presentable appearance for the sake of the crooner of yesteryear.

Bing might have been open to the idea of appearing with a prince of rock, but it wasn't exactly reciprocated. The song selected for them to sing, "Little Drummer Boy," wasn't the kind of song Bowie liked—or wanted to sing. Said he: "I hate this song. Is there something else I could sing?" And: "I'm doing this show because my mother loves Bing Crosby."



With time of the essence, Bowie and the writers came up with a song just for Bowie to sing, as a counterpart to Bing and "The Little Drummer Boy." The result was "Peace on Earth," which Bowie sang while

Bing sang the song Bowie didn't care for. And the result was mesmerizing, for the old crooner and the young rocker did something magical: through the meshing of two Christmas songs, one traditional and one just newly written within the space of an hour, they created a new Christmas hit; it is still heard all these years later when Christmastime comes around.

It was a remarkable moment in music history and when the show aired on November 30, 1977; it proved to be Bing Crosby's last musical testament; for he had died some five weeks after taping that Christmas special, on October 14, 1977—he expired on a golf course in Spain, having hit a “hole in one” at the age of 73 (sic). The man who began his career singing “Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day” died in good spirits and his “co-star,” David Bowie, would go on to bigger and greater renown before he, too, expired.

I remember that Christmas special, for I was 16 years old at the time. I was mesmerized by what these accomplished and professional musicians did, the aging crooner and the young rocker; and it taught me something that evening. I learned that there is much we can learn from each other, the older generation and the younger generation; the gulf between the two isn't all that wide. (Even Bing had nothing but praise for his collaborator, saying that David Bowie was “a clean-cut kid and a real fine asset to the show. He sings well, has a great voice and reads his lines well.”) Coming together through a little music can bridge many a difference and a wonderful harmony can be created between two human beings. As both Bing and David both plaintively sang in the chorus to their collaboration: “Can it be?”

The answer is: Yes, it can. Take a moment and watch the YouTube clip and give thanks that Bing and David came together that time to create some holiday sparkle and a magical Christmas memory.

Joseph McAuley

John Bassett remembers Ken Barnes

John Bassett was the editor of BING magazine from 1971-1975 and he recalls some magical memories from those years.

The winter 2015 edition of BING evoked a myriad of memories appertaining to Ken Barnes, whose admiration of our hero led to the making of some classic albums in the twilight years of Bing's illustrious career. The ICC's American Co-Editor, Greg Van Beek, recalled his personal involvement with Ken in 1998 and, having read the extracts from Ken's correspondence, I was prompted to delve into my own files and peruse letters received from Ken over two decades earlier in 1974.

In October of that year, as Editor of BING, I had written to Ken expressing my interest and support in the proposed recording projects with United Artists. Within

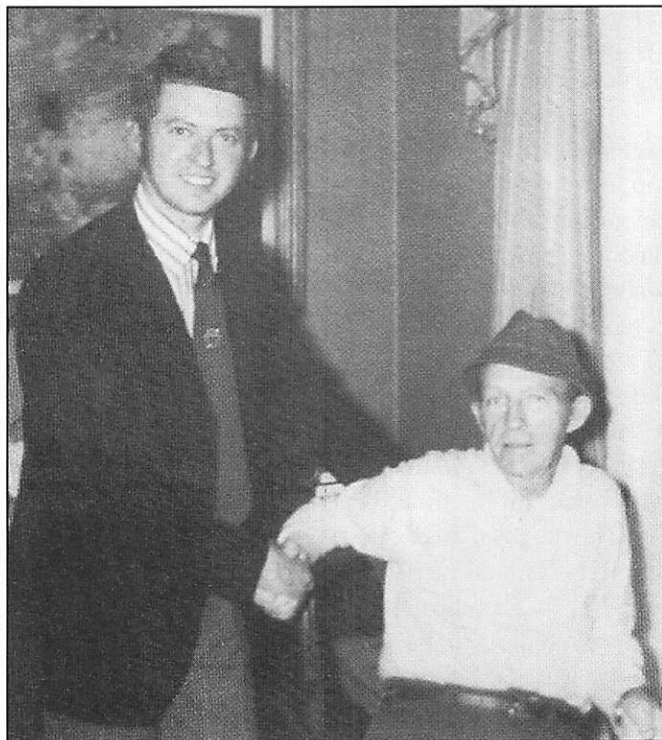
a week, he replied as follows:

I am happy to tell you that the project is definitely on. The actual recording dates have yet to be confirmed, but at the time of writing it looks as though the sessions will take place at Chappells Recording Studio (Studio No. 1) on November 25th, 26th and 27th. These dates, of course, are subject to Bing's actual availability.

Speaking as producer of these sessions, I am naturally pleased to offer admission to a number of Bing's longtime admirers. For reasons of space, and out of consideration for the studio staff and the number of musicians who will be needed on the studio floor, the number of visitors and spectators has got to be limited I would say no more than a dozen at each session, but if I can manage to squeeze in more I'll let you know.

In his recent letter to me, Bing expressed a firm interest in having Britain's Pete Moore do the orchestrations for this album. Pete was responsible for the arrangements on the two Johnny Mercer LPs which I produced earlier this year, and I can promise you that the accompaniments on this forthcoming LP will be superb. Pete and I are flying off to California on Monday, October 7th, and will be routining the songs with Bing later in the week, probably on the 10th.

Thanks for getting in touch. I hope to have the pleasure of meeting you soon.



John Bassett with Bing on October 6, 1977 as he records his final greeting to the ICC

It is common knowledge that Ken successfully recorded Bing singing “The Pleasure of Your Company”

and "Good Companions" later that month. On October 26th Ken wrote again and his words clearly conveyed a sense of excitement at the events which were soon to transpire:

My recent trip was a complete success. Bing is certainly the most professional artist to work with. His attitude to the business of recording and his behaviour in the studio is something that younger artists would do well to study. The duet session with Johnny Mercer has resulted in two absolutely delightful sides. They were recorded last week on the morning of Thursday, October 17th at Johnny's own Heritage Studio in Burbank.

These two sides were done with just a rhythm section of piano, bass and drums, and the orchestral backing will be added here in London when the remainder of the album is recorded. Our tentative dates were November 25th, 26th and 27th, but Bing found that he was unable to make the trip at that time. In fact, he told me he was rather hoping that the whole album could be done in California. I told him this was not possible under the present contract with United Artists. The only way it could be done would be for us to record the backings in London and then fly to California to put his vocal tracks onto the master tapes, and then bring them back to London to be mixed. Although this arrangement would work mechanically, it would not be satisfactory on an artistic level.

Bing has expressed an interest in doing a second LP with us, comprising a collection of his favourite show tunes, but since a good many of the ballads in

this set call for a rubato (out of tempo) approach, both Pete Moore and myself feel it is essential that Bing is in the studio at the same time as the orchestra. I am sure Bing appreciates this and he said he will give the matter some serious thought. Hopefully, both albums will be recorded in London around the end of January - the earliest that Bing can make it over here. In the meantime, we are keeping in close contact regarding this matter.

In your letter you suggested that we should meet beforehand. Well, we've certainly got plenty of time to do that. Just let me know when and where, and I'll be happy to pay for the drinks.

Just one other point. Bing's voice is fuller, richer and stronger than it has been for years, which is one more reason why it is essential that he comes to London for the making of these albums.

My wife and I were elated to accept Ken's invitation to attend Chappells Studio in London on February 26th 1975, on which occasion we settled in the listening booth to watch Bing record "Yours sincerely" in two takes. My account of that memorable morning, which culminated in Bing entering the booth to greet us, was printed in BING#37, March 1975.

I am eternally grateful to Ken Barnes for affording me the rare opportunity to watch Bing at work over 40 years ago, and it is my fervent wish that they are reunited somewhere above, producing heavenly albums with the same level of excellence as they did when here on earth.

John Bassett

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of \$3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries. Please send all advertisements to the Editor

John Bassett, "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RZ, UK

"Alternate Bing Crosby - Vol. 2". Issued as a companion volume to Colin Pugh's invaluable 1988 publication (still available from the ICC), this 64-page edition continues the story by examining every alternate take discovered since that first edition. In total, 119 titles are dealt with in this A4 size publication, currently available at £7.50 (including postage). All remittances in £ sterling should be made payable to John Bassett and sent to him at the address above. (Overseas costs available upon request).

Cliff Brisbois, P.O. Box 504, Agoura Hills, CA 91376-0504, USA (Tel. at 818-707-3065)

Due to a theft, ICC member Cliff seeks to replace past issues of BING magazine that were stolen. Cliff is offering \$30 per original publication plus postage for the following issues: #'s 1-38, #53, #'s 150-157. Contact him direct.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail:

Fesfilms@aol.com - website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD. They also have thousands of Public Domain films and TV shows. Films are sold on DVD-R and Mpeg2 video file formats.

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619 email: raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Free lists available by email. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing and other easy listening artists' CDs, please contact Ray.

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: abcsoc@dodo.com)

The Society has been running since 1977 having originally been formed by the late Bob Machliss. Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights.

In December, the film night had the 1957 Frank Sinatra Christmas Show with Bing, plus a Hollywood Palace Show from November 1966 when Dorothy Lamour was a guest, and the 1966 Danny Kaye Show with Peggy Lee. Moving on to February, the Crosby film shown was *The Star Maker* with a Danny Kaye show from December 25, 1963 and a bonus extra of a Hoagy Carmichael short in support. Future film nights are planned for April 19, June 21, August 16, October 18 and December 6. The venue is the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

BING magazine

We are very proud of this site which contains a considerable amount of reference material and Lionel Pairpoint's marvellous radio book, Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography" and Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" can all be accessed. Your editor's book "Bing Crosby – Day by Day" is on the site too as is the Bing Crosby Discography originally created by Richard Baker and now maintained by David Currington. All of these books are being updated as new information arises. Since the site was redesigned some years ago by Howard Crossland, it has been visited no less than 34,142 times. (The figure was 32,479 four months ago so it's still proving useful.)

See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

Richard Baker recently drew my attention to Hypestat a free statistics and analytics service, and it has this information about our site:

bingmagazine receives about 120 unique visitors and 443 (3.70 per visitor) page views per day which should earn about \$0.96/day from advertising revenue. Estimated site value is \$1,539.32. According to Alexa Traffic Rank bingmagazine.co.uk is ranked number 2,424,386 in the world and 2.6E-5% of global Internet users visit it. This site has Google page rank of 3. Site is hosted in Oakville, ON, L6J, Canada and links to network IP address 69.90.161.95.

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains a mass of information plus some excellent audio and video vaults which contain much rare material. And of course there's Crosby Internet Radio too!

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Daily entries are made and the number of people who have "liked" the site is now 274,795.

Bing Crosby House

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby-House/296302530555116

Rare items from Gonzaga's collection are frequently displayed and it's well worth a look. Alex Westby, who has been managing the Facebook page for Bing Crosby House has now departed to undertake student teaching and Maggie Thompson-Johnston has taken over from him.

Bing Crosby on Twitter

See www.twitter.com/Bingconstantly for this site which has lots of useful tweets and has 6270 followers now.

@Bing_Crosby is still the place to go for Bing Crosby Inc. There are 3749 followers as we go to press.

Harry Lillis "Bing" Crosby—"The Old Groaner"—The Bing Crosby Fan Page

Administered by Bud Lehn, this Facebook group now has 259 members. Plenty of entries being posted. Our member Dave Richards often puts up lyrics from Crosby songs and challenges members of the group to name the song. It's one of those things that challenges you until you can remember what the answer is.

Go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/320952361335214/>

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:

<http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/>

Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so

Jon Oye's Blog

ICC stalwart Jon has his own first-class blog with several pages about Bing showing many rare items from his collection. Go to: <http://derbingle.blogspot.com/>

The Bing Crosby News Archive

David Lobosco runs this blog which has news and many stories about Bing at <http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/>

John Marshall's Compilations

John's excellent 'A Night At The Movies', 'Bing - The Written Word' and 'Footloose Follies' with their many clips of Bing can best be found by using Google as your search engine. As in *internet archive creator john c. marshall* (N. B. It won't work with other search engines, it has to be Google.)

Steven Lewis' Bing Crosby Internet Museum

Nice to see that Steven has put up some of the useful reference material he collected when the discussion board was active. See <http://www.stevenlewis.info/crosby/>

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com, website: www.flias.com/)

A magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

International Al Jolson Society, c/o Sandy Gerloff, 419 Glenwood Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518, USA (email: Flufftwo@dejazzd.com - website: www.jolson.org) A different Jolson radio show can be heard on the web site each week.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, website: www.higheststreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml)

King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send a SAE to Roy Holmes.

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771, www.sinatramusicsociety.com/).

A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 003531 8212418).

Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month in the Tara Towers Hotel, Dublin 4.

Books 'n' Bing

1. 18 Holes with Bing: Golf, Life, and Lessons from Dad

By Nathaniel Crosby, with John Stregé, hardcover: 224 pages, Publisher: Dey Street Books ISBN-10: 0062414283, ISBN-13: 978-0062414281; USA \$17.58, UK £15.88.

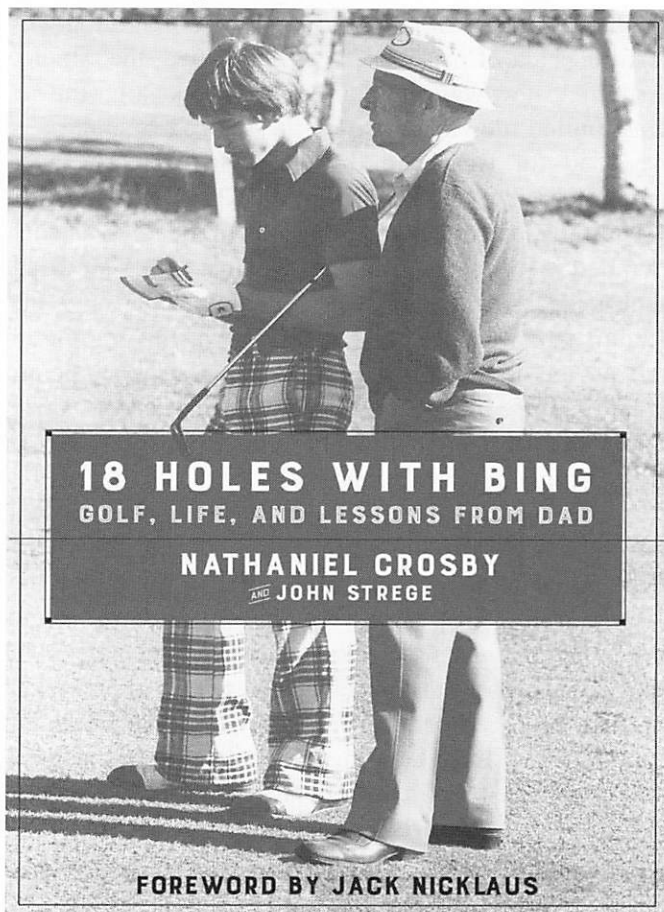
This new book was spotted by Frans van der Kolff and it's due out, appropriately, on May 3. The advance publicity states:

"In this love letter to his father, former professional golfer Nathaniel Crosby shares memories of Bing Crosby on the golf course, and the lessons he taught him about the game and about life. With a Foreword by Jack Nicklaus.

"Bing Crosby was a great ambassador for our game, as well as a great man," hails longtime friend and golf partner, Jack Nicklaus. The beloved singer and star was also an extraordinary teacher who instilled an abiding passion and mastery of the game in his youngest son, Nathaniel. Winning the US Amateur at nineteen, Nathaniel went on to compete in high-level professional tournaments for his entire life.

In *18 Holes with Bing*, Nathaniel introduces us to the Bing Crosby he and his family knew—not the beloved singer who played golf, but a golfer who sang to pay his country club dues. Nathaniel shares exclusive

stories about this American icon golfing, working, and playing with some of the most famous people in history—royalty, titans of industry, stars of stage and screen, and champions of the green, including Bob Hope, Dwight Eisenhower, Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus, and Louis Armstrong. At the book's heart is an intimate account of a father and a son—how a mutual love of golf formed an exceptional emotional bond.



Full of anecdotes, vignettes, and recollections of Bing's time on the course, the tournaments he created and later sponsored, and the constant encouragement he showed his son, *18 Holes with Bing* honors this celebrated golfer, entertainer, and father, and illuminates his life as never before."

Your editor has ordered his copy already! I understand that the book will be available through the official website (www.BingCrosby.com) and that there will be autographed copies.

Stories from Sound Control

Ted Scott recalls his years of audio engineering at Radio Luxembourg, sound engineering for television at ATV, and being a sound supervisor in the London freelance market. This is a slightly abridged version of Ted's article at www.tedscott.co.uk/id13.html

Bing Crosby

The Crosby family had been making a Christmas Special

in the United States for many years. However, in 1976, Bing came to ATV with his wife Kathryn, sons Harry and Nathaniel and daughter Mary, famed for her appearances in the hit soap *Dallas*. Directed by Canadian, Norman Campbell, the guest stars were a young and vibrant Bernadette Peters and a not so young and certainly not so vibrant Jackie Gleason.

Bernadette sang 'One (Singular Sensation)' from the hit Broadway show *Chorus Line*. Her rendition was terrific. Fake Christmas trees swamped the studio. Artificial snow was still being found weeks after the set was pulled down. An over-the-top park area was designed for Bing and the entire family to wander around singing a cacophony of Christmas songs... Thankfully, because the medley was mimed, the listener avoided hearing whining snow machines swirling thousands of white chips of polystyrene around the studio. This was all very jolly, but it was the middle of August and in the hottest year on record. The studio air conditioning could not be used during takes, so the dock doors were almost continually open to let some sort of fresh air in.

1976 was also the time when England played Australia in a series of gripping test matches. The vision department had rigged several floor monitors for the crew to follow the proceedings. The cast gathered round these monitors during breaks requesting explanations of the 'strange proceedings' taking place at Lords cricket ground. The scene boys were happy to oblige. Talks of 'leg before' and 'bowling a maiden over' caused sniggers from Mr. Gleason, who could well have been noting it all for future stag night speeches...

The 1977 "Bing Crosby Merrie Olde Christmas" was a different kettle of fish. The Gary Smith/Dwight Hemion well-oiled production machine took over. Starring David Bowie, Stanley Baxter, Ron Moody, Twiggy, the Crosby Family and the Trinity Boys Choir, the show opens with chauffer-uniformed Royce Mills delivering an invitation to Bing imploring him and the family to visit London to spend Christmas with his previously unknown British relative Sir Percy Crosby (Ron Moody). The visit to Sir Percy's baronial mansion provided an opportunity for Messrs Baxter & Moody to adopt several parts Twiggy joined Ron Moody in a Christmas-past Dickensian sequence where they both also perform three different characters each. The 'Upstairs Downstairs' scenario gave Stanley Baxter the opportunity to instruct Kathy Crosby in the downstairs culinary arts. In another part of the show he did a Bob Hope impression that had Bing cracking up to such an extent he couldn't say his lines.

Halfway through the show, David Bowie popped in to sing 'Little Drummer Boy' with Bing at the piano. Several months later, a record company enquired whether the master tape could be used to release a record in time for Christmas. I went to the sound store where the master tapes were kept to discover that the

sound 16 tracks and quarter inch tapes had been erased. Head of Sound, Des Gray had authorised this because although not yet transmitted, the programme had been dubbed and was ready to air. I enquired why other programmes, some many years old, were still to be found in the store - no response. As a result of this the record company decided to use my on-line mix with Bing and David Bowie's voices picked up via the boom. The record had to be transcribed from a quarter inch tape recording that I had saved. It got to number one that Christmas, number two the following Christmas and still in the charts years later. Where is my Gold disc EMI?



Stanley Baxter as the "Bob Hope" court jester.

This was a happy shoot with Bing and the boys often disrupting a voice recording session because Nathaniel (a golfer heading for pro status) would come in to the vocal booth and say; 'Looks great out, let's go play golf.' The final song in the show was, of course, 'White Christmas'. To our surprise, Bing wanted cue cards for the lyrics. He was a gentle, quiet man; patiently sitting with Kathryn in the beautiful lounge set designed by Henry Graveney, while Dwight gave instructions to the crew, or Johnny Rook fiddled with his lights. When I asked David Bowie whether I could put tape echo on some of his lyrics in the 'Heroes' song, he was hesitant until Bing assured him that it was safe in my hands.

Buz Kohan was the superb American writer whilst the Norman Maen dancers shone in the marvelous Dickens sequence on the back lot. This twenty minutes medley of Dickens characters brilliantly choreographed and performed, was the highlight of the show. Settled snow, a gorgeously realistic set, horses and carts, a

gaggle of geese all added to a showcase for the talents of Ron Moody and Twiggy.

Sadly, this was to be Bing's last ever show - he died on a golf course in England many weeks before Christmas. Kathryn Crosby prefaced the show on transmission to say that Bing had remarked that it was one of his happiest experiences and he was proud of the show. I believe it is available commercially and I would thoroughly recommend as a lovely family Christmas viewing.

Ted Scott

(Editor: My attention was drawn to Ted Scott's site by Tristan Brittain-Dissont, the Archivist of the Tony Hancock Appreciation Society (www.tonyhancock.org.uk) (Email: tbd@capaltec.com phone: 07818 434 272). In his email to me, he said "Reel to reels represent the only chance we have of finding lost Hancock (and, indeed, Goon) shows. I remain hopeful that there are folk out there (like your members) who had relatives who recorded shows when they were first broadcast in the 50s - or did it themselves - and put them in a box which had sat in a loft ever since. Or that members like yours are scouring boot sales for Bing stuff and, instead, come across Hancock stuff. I am happy to chase any wild geese...." So if you have any Tony Hancock material, please contact Tristran.)

Saturday essay: A Christmas epiphany

Colin McNickle replayed a nice memory in his article in Pennsylvania's *Tribune-Review* on December 4.

December 1975. The week before Christmas. A stomach ache grew into a steady abdominal pain. Dad called the family doctor.

"Yes," Dad said. "We'll see you there shortly." Newborns and bum 17-year-old appendixes have an affinity for the overnight. And it was in short order that a hate-love relationship began with Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Rosemary Clooney and Vera-Ellen.

Not long after being wheeled from recovery, the refrains of the movie *White Christmas*, from the roommate's TV, roused me. It was nice to have something Christmassy to help regain one's bearings.

Unfortunately, it was part of a *White Christmas* marathon. As the fourth-straight airing ended, "Never again" was sworn. But a funny thing happened on the way to maturity.

Flipping the channels in the run up to Christmas 1980, the end of *White Christmas* was come upon. It was the part where Gen. Waverly's old charges surprise him with a Christmas Eve fete at his struggling Vermont inn. The power of the sentiment — truly giving of one's self to aid another — was overwhelming; the tears flowed at this Christmas epiphany.

Bing and the gang have been in excellent standing ever since. And, yes, the tears still flow when the general enters that packed room.

A Meeting with Bing Crosby

Maureen Solomon spotted an entry on a website called "Morbidity Curiosity: Celebrity Tombstones across America" in which Jack Waite recalled his meetings with various celebrities. It's worth reading.

The two occasions on which I met Bing Crosby, the most popular singer of the 20th Century.

I once worked for a friend of Bing's, the Rev. James Keller, who was the founder of The Christophers. Bing Crosby had appeared, gratis, on The Christopher TV show several times. But, these appearances always took place in California, not in New York, which was the city where I worked for Rev. James Keller. So, I had never had the opportunity to meet Bing, who was my lifelong idol.

After I left The Christophers, I went on a vacation to California, and came up with the idea that I ought to try making a phone call to Bing's office!

My plan was to explain that Bing Crosby and I had a mutual friend (Rev. Keller). And, to see whether that fact might possibly open the door for me to meet Bing Crosby in person. This was early in December 1968.

I managed to get a phone call through to Bing's manager (*sic*), whose name was Leo Lynn. But, Mr. Lynn told me that Bing would not be in the office for at least a week. Because, Bing was rehearsing at the Hollywood Palace for that year's Christmas show, along with his entire second family.

I was very disappointed, and I guess Mr. Lynn realized it. So, he suggested that I actually go to the Hollywood Palace. And, that I should give the doorman the message that I had been sent there by Leo Lynn.

The manager said that there was a chance that Bing might come out to talk to me as a favor to Mr. Lynn. (I believe that Mr. Lynn also phoned the Hollywood Palace, in advance of my arrival.)

When I got to the Hollywood Palace, it was around noon. When I told the doorman that Leo Lynn had suggested that Bing might be willing to come out and talk to me, the doorman told me to wait. The doorman then went inside and he evidently spoke to Bing about me, because in a few minutes, the doorman came back out, and said that Bing would say hello when he came out for lunch, within the next few minutes.

Bing finally came out, wearing a hat to cover his bald head ... and, in those days, he was still smoking his pipe, so that he looked exactly like the famous Bing Crosby character, who appeared in the movies, and on radio and television.

Bing had a gorgeous blonde on his arm (and, to this day, I have no idea who the blonde was) and I have always been curious. Because, Bing's wife, Kathryn,

and his second brood of children, were all inside the theater, rehearsing the show with him, and none of them came out with Bing.

Anyway, Bing saw me, and came over to me and shook hands. He said, "So, you're a friend of Father Keller, eh?" We talked for a few minutes, but to be honest, I do not recall the conversation, because I was too excited!

Here I was, actually talking to a man I had admired from the day I first listened to him, crooning on the radio, when I was little more than an infant!

Somewhere in the conversation, though, Bing asked me whether I would like to attend the final dress rehearsal and the actual taping of the Christmas show, which would be taking place in a couple of days.

Of course, I was thrilled.

So, Bing gave me tickets, and after we said goodbye, he, and his gorgeous blonde friend, jay-walked across Vine Street and went into a restaurant together.

It was only then that I realized that I had completely overlooked asking Bing for his autograph! So, when the night of the final rehearsal and the actual taping came around, I showed up with a little black notebook, and a red Bic pen.

I attended both the rehearsal and the actual taping.



Bing rehearses for his Hollywood Palace show

Bing could not remember the words to several of his songs, including "White Christmas!" But, this did not bother him...when he forgot the words, he would simply stroll away from the other performers, and hum the song while murmuring the words until he finally got them straight, and then would come back and do the songs over again. He would then crack some jokes about the situation, the audience would laugh, and everyone had a good time. Bing apparently did not get in the least upset

about goofing up on stage ... and, indeed, he acted as though this were the normal thing for him.

Although Bob Hope did not appear in the actual Christmas show, he did make an appearance with Bing at the end of the taping, for a promotion of a future show that they were going to do together.

Two of Bing's sons, from his marriage to Dixie Lee, were in the audience, seated a couple of rows in front of me. But, they were merely spectators, just as I was. They were not in the show. After the show, Bing beckoned for those two sons to come up on stage to talk to him, but they both ignored Bing's invitation. Bing finally left the stage, and came down into the audience to talk to the sons. They all shook hands. Gary was not there.

I left the theater, and went around back to the stage entrance. I waited for Bing to come out, hoping to get an autograph. One other adult.... a man, accompanied by several of his children ... was also waiting.

Bob Hope came out first, and he was alone. As Bob Hope approached us, the man's children ran over to Hope, all excited, asking for his autograph. Bob Hope walked right past them, as though he did not even notice them. So, this turned me off against Bob Hope, whom I had previously admired greatly, and I did not even attempt to approach Hope.

Finally, Bing and his wife, Kathryn, came out...none of their children were with them. I walked up to them, but it was obvious that Bing did not remember me from a couple of days before. Bing was about to walk right past me, even though he could see that I had my little notebook in my hand. But, Kathryn saved the day for me, and said, "Bing, I think this man wants your autograph."

Bing then took the book from me, and asked me for a pen. I handed him the red Bic, and he signed a page in the book for me. He was not in the least enthusiastic about doing so ... and I am certain that if Kathryn had not asked him to sign, he would simply have ignored me, just as Bob Hope had just ignored those children. I was grateful to Kathryn, and I asked her to sign my book. So, Kathryn signed right under Bing's signature, and she gave me a knowing wink and a smile. And, what a smile she had! Perfect, beautiful teeth, and a twinkle in her eyes. Kathryn's wonderful smile could easily have lit the entire dark street that night! So, that is the story of my two meetings with Bing Crosby.

Jack Waite

The Christophers

Ron Hall of Festival Films recently sent your Editor a short clip of Bing introducing a television program produced by The Christophers called "Knock on Every Door". The short intro by Bing appears to have been filmed on the *High Tor* set in 1955.

The Christophers are a Christian inspirational group that was founded in 1945 by Father James Keller.

In thanking Ron for the clip I wondered how many introductions Bing did for The Christophers. This is what Ron had to say.



Bing introduces "Knock on Every Door".

"I just went through all the 64 episodes of Christophers at the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) and only found those two listed that Bing introduces:

The World Starts with Jimmy – shown Dec. 4, 1955

Knock on Every Door – shown May 23, 1958

Also of interest:

Bob & Dolores Hope: Emphasis, the Importance of Positive Action July 11, 1953

Aug 16, 1970 episode with Kathryn Crosby

Not listed are:

The first episode (February 25, 1950) that we are familiar with - "You Can Change the World" - with Bing, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, etc.

"Faith, Hope and Hogan" with Bing, Bob Hope and Ben Hogan.

"Lincoln Speaks for Himself" which I have and only mention because it is another episode NOT listed at IMDB. This means there may be many more unlisted episodes between 1950 and 1970.

I know the Christophers organization does not have copies of most of them, and do not have an accurate list of titles even. My guess would be that the IMDB listings were taken from old TV Guides."

Your Editor has a note that Bing was in a Christophers program with Dennis Day shown on January 10, 1954 broadcast on WPIX-TV in New York but I have no further information.

Ron mentioned "You Can Change the World" which Keith Parkinson touched on way back in BING #154. In 1948, Father Keller had published a book called "You Can Change the World" to motivate lay Catholics to become active in living and spreading their faith. In 1949, it was decided to make a short film with the same

title using celebrities to help promote it. Jack Benny, Ann Blyth, Paul Douglas, Irene Dunne, William Holden, Bob Hope and Loretta Young were featured listening to Father Keller espousing his ideas and halfway through Bing is introduced by songwriters Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke. He strolls in, says a few words, sings "Early American" and then departs. There are indications that this was filmed in late 1949 which fits in with Ron Hall's date of February 25, 1950 for its showing on TV.

"Faith, Hope and Hogan" was probably filmed in March 1952 in Palm Springs. Bing, Bob Hope, Ben Hogan, Phil Harris and Ralph Kiner took part in the film which was produced by Father Keller and televised on his Sunday religious program. Again, Father Keller is seen telling the celebrities about his beliefs. Bing sang a chorus of the Christophers theme song "One Little Candle" accompanied by Perry Botkin. Bob Hope talked about the film in one of his books.

A couple of years ago I went to Palm Springs to relax. My phone rang and a voice said, "This is Father Keller." Father Keller is the big mind behind the Christopher Movement. The Christophers are trying to spread religion in general. They don't make any special effort to spread the Catholic Religion, they just try to spread good to the whole world. . . .

"I'm making a little movie short for the Christophers with Ben Hogan," he said, "I'd like to have you come over and say a few words. . . ."

The next day Bing and I joined him there [at the golf club]. The "few words" wound up as an hour and a half of dialogue between golf shots. The entire country must have seen this film by now because every time Hogan wins a tournament, they run it on television.

(Bob Hope, *Have Tux, Will Travel*, page 272)

If anyone has any further details about Bing's appearances on The Christophers programs, please let us know.



Celluloid Crosby

Keith Parkinson remembers the time when he first became a Crosby fan.

Spring, 1946.

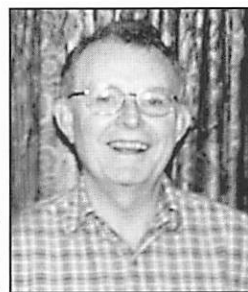
About seventy years ago from when you are reading this I first saw Bing Crosby in a film. Most of life's firsts remain in the memory forever and when I saw *Road to Utopia* I knew I would follow Bing's movie career thereafter. His voice had been part of the soundtrack of life at home because since his discharge from the army, my dad played Bing's Brunswick 78s most days. Now, having seen Bing on screen, I grew to recognise he was a personable light comedian as well as a great singer.

My introduction to Bing the actor took place at the Majestic cinema in Bolton. It was one of four neighbourhood cinemas within walking distance from home and every Saturday evening was set aside for queuing and viewing at one of them. Cinema going in 1946 was at an all-time high and the "full house" board was a familiar sight, especially on Saturdays. It now seems incredible that the Majestic's 1660 seat auditorium could be filled twice in one night but that was a regular occurrence when 10 pence could block out real life for a couple of hours in those pre-television days. It was a very different story a decade later when cinema audiences plummeted and the Majestic became a

petrol station.

The theatrical life of *Road to Utopia* spanned some six years. Its New York opening was on 27th February, 1946. That took place at the massive Paramount Theatre, which had a seating capacity of 3650. As was often the case with New York's showcase theatres in the 1940s the film was accompanied by a stage show. Benny Goodman and his orchestra played on the opening week which resulted in a box-office record being set. \$135,000 was the total take although there is no way of knowing how to share that between *Utopia* and Goodman. Neither is there any way of knowing why Paramount waited nearly two years before releasing a sure fire product which had been completed early in 1944. A backlog of product, perhaps? Certainly the film going public was ready for another *Road* film instalment. That can be confirmed by the North American theatrical rentals reaching a healthy \$4.5million. The popularity of *Road to Utopia* resulted in the film ranking fourth in the United States box-office successes for 1946.

The measurement of the film's success with moviegoers was slightly more scientific in the U.K. Sidney Bernstein operated 56 cinemas on his Granada circuit by 1948. He commissioned a survey of those



The boys are in trouble on their way to Utopia.

attending his cinemas to establish the most popular films shown during 1946-7. Audiences selected from 36 films his cinemas screened. *Utopia* saw a restricted release on Bernstein's Granada screens following its release on the main Odeon circuit. The results were expressed in percentages under four rating categories. Here's an extract from the findings:

<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Bad</u>
1. The Way to the Stars			
73	23	4	-
8. The Bells of St. Mary's			
46	41	11	2
33. Road to Utopia			
16	51	28	5
36. The Three Caballeros			
12	30	40	18

The Bolton exhibition of *Road to Utopia* was part of a nationwide pattern that spring of seventy years ago. That applied north of the border in Scotland. It played the Odeon, Motherwell for six days during week commencing 8th April, 1946 and reappeared in the nearby Lanarkshire town of Wishaw for three days from 13th June, 1946. That second showing was at Green's Playhouse which had just short of 3000 seats to fill. I'll return to Lanarkshire shortly. Its Scottish showings were not supported by a 'B' feature. The main feature was a sufficient draw. In 1952 the Odeon circuit reclaimed it for Sunday showings. These one-day only presentations saw *Train to Alcatraz* starring Don Barry in support.

What other Bing Crosby films could I have seen in the first half of 1946? One way to find out was to inspect old copies of *The Bolton Evening News*, which at that time advertised what was showing in about forty cinemas in the town. Or I could rely on the booklet "Wishaw Cinema Listings 1946, Part One". Compiled by John J. McKillop, photocopies of the weekly full-page 'Movieland' feature provide details of eight cinemas in the *Wishaw Press and Advertiser*. For twenty years JJMcK has been chronicling what was on screen in the county of Lanarkshire. And what was playing in that part of Scotland back then was not too different from films showing in my part of Lancashire. So, to answer this paragraph's opening sentence: four.

The second Bing film to be shown in the Scottish county in 1946 was *If I Had My Way*. By then some six years old, it was thought capable of selling a few tickets during that film exhibitors 'dead' month of January. It was on screen for three days from 29th January at the Picture House, Wishaw. The supporting film would have also been a draw in its own right: Tommy Handley in *Time Flies*. Handley had greater pulling power than Gloria Jean, Bing's co-star in *If I Had My Way*. I always regarded her as a second string player. Universal made no secret of the fact that she was signed to keep Deanna

Durbin in line. DD's weight was prone to pile on from time to time and Gloria Jean's presence at the studio was a veiled threat. Miss Jean's bitterness became apparent in later years. Her inability to secure any acting chores saw her blaming the studios, the system, her agents and the internal revenue. The simple truth was that audiences couldn't care less. Her memory of working with Bing remained undimmed, however. In a 1998 interview she recounted how studios prepared soundtrack vocals. After admitting that, like Bing, she couldn't read music she went on to say:

"We would rehearse several times with the piano and then a couple of times with the studio orchestra. Bing would ask, 'Do you think you know it?' I'd say, 'Yes, I think so.' He'd say, 'Me too.' and we'd record it. A lot of times we would do a song in one take."

At the time of the film's initial release reviews were as uncomplimentary as Gloria Jean. The critic from the Hollywood Citizen News wrote: "The story is laborious and unimaginative, the direction erratic, the characterizations overdrawn...Crosby's own easy going characterization is an asset, and so, of course, are his songs..." After reading that, would you rush out to see the film? Particularly as the newspaper revealed that the supporting films at Los Angeles Pantages and Hillstreet cinemas were *Men without Souls* and *Island of Doomed Men* respectively! In complete contrast, *If I Had My Way* played in more deserving surroundings at the Granada, Slough. This was one of the aforementioned Sidney Bernstein cinemas. For the six days commencing 13th September, 1948, the programme was:

4.10 and 8.15 Billy Cotton and his Band
12.30, 4.35, and 9.00 *If I Had My Way*
2.20 and 6.25 Abbott and Costello in *Rookies*

The screening times of *If I Had My Way* indicate that it was the main film, supported by the A & C film. Once a film had completed its initial run it was down to individual cinemas to decide where to place it in the programming. Surprisingly it supported *Give Us the Moon* when it played the Exchange Cinema, Northampton in October 1944. Margaret Lockwood and Vic Oliver starred in that one. Both were bankable draws at the time.

As for Bing's songs receiving praise in the Hollywood Citizen News review, composers Burke and Van Heusen would have been heartened to know that "Meet the Sun Halfway" was used as an alarm call of sorts. It was played over the public address system every morning at the privately owned Ivy House Holiday Camp near Blackpool.

The other two Bing pictures playing Lanarkshire in early 1946 were less significant. The first, *Duffy's Tavern*, received wide distribution. It opened at the Odeon, Motherwell for three days commencing 25th February when it was supported by Lon Chaney in *Strange Confession*. Three weeks later it played Greens

Playhouse in Wishaw before ending its Lanarkshire life with a two day booking at the Regal, Shotts in May. It seems unlikely that word of mouth would account for its apparent popularity with audiences. In fact, the title of the film would not hold the attraction that prevailed in the U.S.A. when at least it was pre-sold to followers of Ed Gardner's radio show. The main Crosby involvement with the film was Bing singing a parody of his recent hit: "Swinging on a Star". Audiences were also given a reminder of Bing's early hits when "Learn to Croon", "Please" and "Love in Bloom" were heard emanating from a phonograph.

It was also the Crosby voice which provided the Bing connection with *Out of This World*, the first of the quartet of Crosby related films which played in Lanarkshire in the winter of 1946. It opened for a three day run at Greens Playhouse, Wishaw on 28th January with *I Love a Mystery* playing in support. The three Bing vocals to which Eddie Bracken mimed were never destined to become evergreens in the Crosby catalogue: "Out of This World", "June Comes around Every Year" and "I'd Rather Be Me" were unremarkable. Along with *Duffy's Tavern*, *Out of This World* holds little appeal these days to even the most ardent fan. However, in the first year of peace following World War II, picturegoing was a cheap form of escapism and those who went week after week whatever was showing would be satisfied.

I was more than satisfied having seen *Road to Utopia*. And I had no idea what pleasures were in store. Technicolor goodies such as *The Emperor Waltz*, *White Christmas* and *High Society* were still to come.

Keith Parkinson k.parkinson1941@btinternet.com

Hope and Crosby's Road movies paved the way for future wiseacres

Noel Murray writing on the A. V. Club website on January 28 had some personal opinions about the Road films.

Before the term "hipster" was co-opted and degraded, the word was just a variation on "hepcat," referring generally to musicians, comedians... really anyone keenly aware of what's square and what's cool. From the end of WWII to the beginning of the LBJ administration, some of the hippest guys and gals were also America's biggest stars. By the time Beatlemania hit, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and their peers represented the stodgy establishment that the rock 'n' roll generation was looking to defy. But they weren't always so creaky. These old-guard entertainers all came up through vaudeville and jazz clubs, where they developed a refined sense of sarcasm and a slick line of patter—much of it picked up from "the boys in the band," who'd learned it from black entertainers in after-hours joints.

That particular strain of unflappability flowered fullest in Sinatra and Martin's "Rat Pack," who conversed in nudges and inside jokes, and rarely seemed to care if their audience kept up. They peddled coolness to 1950s Las Vegas audiences, and then in a handful of movies and TV specials in the early 1960s. But a decade before all that, Americans got hip via Hope and Crosby's "Road pictures." Between 1940 and 1947, the duo starred in five of these Paramount comedies, partly pitched as parodies of various popular globe-hopping adventure genres, and partly as a showcase for a couple of smart-ass radio stars.

In the 1930s, the biggest comedy teams were mostly carryovers from the silent era, mixing verbal wit with costumed slapstick, delivered by broad "types." But when Hope and Crosby were together, they played themselves, more or less. The character names changed from picture to picture, but they nearly always started out as fast-talking song-and-dance men, who never took even the direst life-or-death situation too seriously.



The series was a hit from the start, even though the first film—1940's *Road to Singapore*—is one of the weakest. For most of their team-ups, Hope and Crosby played horny, savvy underdogs, but here they're a couple of woman-hating swells, who suffer a string of mishaps that land them on an exotic island, where they're taken care of by a friendly native. *Road to Singapore* isn't as funny or as cleverly self-referential as what would come later; it became a hit largely due to the fast-paced, partially ad-libbed repartee between the two stars, which was unlike anything that movie audiences had heard before. The first film also established some of the Road pictures' recurring shtick,

both good (like the boys' rivalry for the attention of a shapely, lively young woman played by Dorothy Lamour) and not-so-good (like the stereotype-heavy mockery of other cultures, often delivered by Hope and Crosby in racist makeup and costumes).

The series really started to hit its stride the following year, with *Road to Zanzibar*. Mid-film, the heroes attempt a stunt they pulled multiple times in Singapore—a version of “pattycake” that ends with them attacking whoever’s threatening them—but when the bad guy ducks, Hope cracks, “He must’ve seen the picture,” winking at the millions of people who saw the first film. That kind of fourth-wall-breaking would become the norm for the Road series, which quickly developed a formula that carried over even into lesser latter-day entries like 1952’s *Road to Bali* and 1962’s *The Road to Hong Kong*. In nearly all the movies, fans could expect Crosby to bait Hope.

Although the two actors weren’t locked into types in the way that Laurel & Hardy or Abbott & Costello were, they did fall into the same dynamic over and over in their films. Crosby would be the cool-headed mastermind, who’d come up with a dangerous money-making scheme. Hope would be the hyper chatterbox, who’d let himself get talked into bearing the brunt of any trouble. For their hassle, Hope’s characters usually ended up losing the love interest to Crosby’s characters, along with the bulk of any recovered fortune to Crosby. In the most meta of the Road pictures (and the second-best overall), *Road to Utopia*, Hope’s Chester Hooton lets Crosby’s Duke Johnson have it, reciting a litany of all the time their schemes went badly for him personally. They finally agree to split up, but as they’re going their separate ways, Duke picks Chester’s pocket, all but forcing him to change course and head up to Alaska.

The Road pictures’ plots were jam-packed, but the screenwriters (which included Melvin Frank, Norman Panama, Don Hartman, and Frank Butler) didn’t pretend they mattered. More than once, the films openly mock the notion that anything that happens has to make sense. In *Road to Rio*, the entire story hinges on an “important” document, which in the last scene Crosby’s Scat Sweeney reads and tears up, refusing to explain what it says. And in *Road to Bali*, Hope’s Harold Gridley has an underwater excursion that seems like it’s about to end in his death, but when he makes it to the surface, he chooses to give his explanation in the far back of the frame, out of the audience’s earshot. These movies are full of dodges and red herrings—including, in *Rio*, a repeated cut back to a galloping cavalry that never arrives.

When *Road to Singapore* came out, Hope was third-billed behind Crosby and their leading lady, Dorothy Lamour, who was famous at the time for playing exotic ladies in skimpy costumes. Lamour’s roles in the Road pictures would evolve over the years—with her occasionally even playing somewhat

sinister and duplicitous characters—but she was primarily hired to be a rare beauty, and she was often asked to sing and dance in outfits that accentuated her curvy figure. Her heroines also frequently drove a wedge between the heroes, who each took turns trying to romance her. Those woo-pitching scenes are some of the sweetest and funniest in the series. Crosby’s best comes in *Zanzibar*, where the two of them take a boat ride where they make fun of phony Hollywood love scenes, until they realize that they’re in one. Hope’s best is in *Utopia*, where Lamour’s scheming character makes insults sound like compliments, until he finally gets so worked up that he turns to the camera and says, “As far as I’m concerned the picture could end right here, folks.”

Hope’s nod to the camera during his big love scene isn’t at all off-brand for the series, which was always talking to the audience and putting moments in quotation marks. The meta-gags are especially thick in *Road to Utopia*, which features a running bit where humorist Robert Benchley pops up in the corner of the screen to explain what’s happening as best as he can, and also includes a moment where Hope is moved by the sight of a mountain that looks like the Paramount logo.



Bing shows off his beard in *Road to Bali*

Hope and Crosby both emerged from vaudeville, and their movie collaborations were extensions of that tradition, featuring a little patter, a little bawdy humor, and a little music. Frequently, the songs themselves would be big comedy set pieces. *Road to Morocco* is the best film in the series for a number of reasons—most

notably because it was the third in three years, and by the time the team made it they'd become a well-oiled machine. But it's also a winner because it contains two of the most memorable musical performances. One's the title song, where the stars predict the plot of the picture, based on what usually happens in these films. And later, while stranded in the desert, the boys experience a shared mirage of Dorothy Lamour, with whom they sing a number where all their voices have been switched around. They take advantage of the mix-up to do their meanest impressions of each other.

The original appeal of the Hope/Crosby pairing was the players' quickness. They were so ready with a quip that audiences barely had a chance to finish laughing at a Crosby line before Hope had topped it (and vice-versa). And when they weren't making "jokes" per se, they both just talked in humorous way. Even relatively disappointing movies like *Road to Bali* can be counted on for some snappy dialogue—like when the boys grow bushy beards on a long journey and Crosby notes, "It'll take a mowing machine to get this hedge knocked off."

Very occasionally, the snappy chatter was even put in service of some actual acting. Crosby has a very nice scene in *Road to Rio* where his Scat tells Lamour's distraught Lucia Maria De Andrade about his days playing music for Hollywood movies, while the two of them sit in a theater on a cruise ship and watch one of those pictures. Scat urges Lucia not to put too much stock in fantasies, by letting her know what was really happening behind the scenes with the film's two romantic leads.

Nevertheless, the largely ship-bound, plot-light *Rio* gave some indication that the series was running out of steam. That may explain why Hope and Crosby took five years off before the next one—during which time Crosby cemented his reputation as an Oscar-caliber actor and pop-music legend, while Hope made some of his best solo comedies, and became a TV star. When the duo re-teamed for the Technicolor *Road to Bali* (the only *Road* picture in color), the movie came off as a perfunctory rehash of everything that had worked before. Its best gag involves the boys running into Humphrey Bogart—or rather, *African Queen* footage of Bogie—and Hope finding the actor's Oscar and launching into an acceptance speech.

The most fascinating entry in the entire franchise though is also the worst—and the last. From the inexplicably superfluous "The" to the most excessive use of ethnic stereotyping since Singapore, *The Road to Hong Kong* is a weird case of a venerable property awkwardly trying to contemporize while clinging to the wrong old-fashioned elements. Hong Kong relegates an aging (but still plenty va-voom) Dorothy Lamour to a cameo appearance, while Joan Collins steps in as the love interest. Meanwhile, the boys get embroiled in a spy caper that sees them dealing with villains straight out of a James Bond novel (a few months before the

movie version of *Dr. No* came out), and getting shot into outer space as a last-minute replacement for apes. Through all the up-to-date hijinks, Hope and Crosby found time to crack jokes about Hong Kong's "bamboo television antennas," to sing a song that's a litany of Asian clichés, and to do wacky Chinese accents.

The stars didn't do themselves any favors by including a cameo by Peter Sellers, who at the time was building a reputation as one of Britain's brightest comic actors. In a way, the Sellers scene is as clunky and questionable as the rest of *The Road to Hong Kong*. He does one of his brownface routines, playing an absent-minded Indian doctor. Still, Hope and Crosby let their guest upstage them—very unusual for the series—and for a few minutes the sense of absurdity changes the entire energy of the film. For rock 'n' roll era moviegoers, a semi-surreal line like Sellers' "you are suffering from a severe attack of teeth... and two cavities" came off as much weirder—and thus cooler—than shots of Hope and Crosby waddling around in spacesuits designed for monkeys.

And yet, again, there are times here when the duo recaptures their old magic. When Hope's Chester Babcock needs a piece of paper and Crosby's Harry Turner asks, "Got a racing form or a summons on you?"... that's the old stuff, right there. And while *The Road to Hong Kong* isn't so great compared to what came before, it's really the last good starring role for Hope, who spent the rest of the 1960s making the likes of *Boy*, *Did I Get a Wrong Number!* and *How To Commit Marriage*. Crosby, meanwhile, joined the ensembles for *Robin and the 7 Hoods* (alongside the Rat Pack) and the 1966 remake of *Stagecoach*, then more or less quit the movie business. The end of the *Roads* came right as something else was about to begin—a year or so before The Beatles would hit it big with a public persona that relied a lot on zippy give-and-take, like a supercharged Hope and Crosby. And so the cycle rolled on. Any time a comedian or musician winks at the camera or pretends to be too cool for the room, the Hope and Crosby estates should get a nickel.

Final ranking:

1. Road to Morocco (1942)
2. Road to Utopia (1946)
3. Road to Zanzibar (1941)
4. Road to Rio (1947)
5. Road to Singapore (1940)
6. Road to Bali (1952)
7. The Road to Hong Kong (1962)

Noel Murray

(Editor: An interesting article but there were perhaps one or two somewhat controversial points and members' comments would be welcome.)

"Are You Wearing Old Dreams...?"

Martin McQuade went along to an important auction in November.

On Nov. 23, 2015 Bonham's Auction House in New York, in collaboration with Turner Classic Movies held its third annual auction of movie memorabilia. Scores of "Treasures from the Dream Factory" were up for bid, including several items of interest to Bing fans.

Most prominent among these was a letter, dated October 11, 1954 addressed to Judy Garland who was then residing at 144 South Mapleton in West Los Angeles.

My dear Judy,

I didn't get to hear the dedicatory program which NBC had on the radio a couple of Sundays back because it was on at 3 PM on a Sunday afternoon, and you know where I am likely to be at that time on that day - generally around the 11th hole, trying to convert a high faded tee shot into a par 4.

But the people at NBC were kind enough to send me a record of the whole affair, and I played it the other day at my leisure and listened to it carefully. I was touched by the kind things you said about the album, and I just wanted you to know how deeply I appreciate it. As ever - your friend,

Bing Crosby

This charming display of affection references the *Bing Crosby Twentieth Anniversary Tribute* honoring Bing's two decades with Decca Records. The show was broadcast on Sept. 26, 1954 and was hosted by Gary Crosby. Since Buddy Cole was a featured guest, it is a safe hunch that the cited album is *was* the Musical Autobiography set. The letter sold for 2750 dollars.

There were additional Crosbyana collectibles available for auction :

- A collection of 21 bound screenplays from the Natalie Wood estate, including *Just For You*. This fetched 6250 dollars.
- A letter handwritten by Grace Kelly postmarked March 22, 1956 with the heading, "Dear Prudy" regarding her upcoming wedding to Prince Rainer. The Serene Highness-to-be mentions, "High Society is going well and is great fun." The letter went for 6000 dollars.
- A celluloid from *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad*, picturing the preening Crane ogling a pie. An original screenplay of *Road to Morocco*, with the names of screenwriters Don Hartman and Frank Butler printed on the cover and dated October 28, 1941.
- A large collection of rare contact sheets from *Let's Make Love*, one of which shows Bing interacting

with Yves Montand.

- A One-sheet poster of *Let's Make Love*.

I would like to express my gratitude to Bonham's senior entertainment memorabilia expert Dana Hawkes - and to the attentive and courteous staff - for allowing me to examine at close range these and many other delectable artifacts from Hollywood's Golden Age.

In addition, may I say to the successful bidders...

"You Lucky People You"

Martin McQuade

Bing Crosby and The Dream Factory

The redoubtable John Marshall has been doing some amazing research into the 'pulp' movie magazines so beloved by the 1930's and '40's. These magazines provided a drab world with windows into an entirely different lifestyle and culture.

Their glamorous, colourful and steamily hyperbolic view of Hollywood's rich and famous (who kept the wheels of Pauline Kael's Dream Factory turning) are long gone, never to be seen again - until now, brought back to life by John in this new PowerPoint 200-page presentation.

This is the young Bing Crosby as his story was taking shape, written by those who created it..... as it happened..... on the spot. Tablets of stone, fresh down from the mountain. See just how much media space the crooner occupied between 1931 and 1945 through the medium of the authentic publications of the period. These vivid, contemporary essays take us as close to the young Crosby as we're ever likely to get - verbatim information free from subsequent alteration, manipulation, editorial slant or bias.

To download this remarkable research, go to:

<https://archive.org/details/BINGCROSBYANDTHEDREAMFACTORY>

Follow the Sun

Something else John Marshall has sent us are the following very rare publicity items which are reproduced below.

Does it ring a bell? *Follow the Sun* seems to have been on the drawing board for a time. A title *Beach of Dreams* was mentioned by *Variety* as being a project for Lewis E. Gensler. Then *Follow the Sun* was listed in Paramount's "Made to Measure Group" in *Variety* magazine on June 17, 1936 with filming scheduled for January 1937. *Variety* commented on July 11, 1936 that the Bing Crosby picture, *Follow the Sun*, "which had been assigned to Lewis E. Gensler for production at Paramount, is again on the unassigned list." Then on

December 31, 1937 *Variety* stated that "George Burns and Gracie Allen yesterday were added to the cast of Paramount's *Follow the Sun*, Bing Crosby vehicle to be produced by Lewis E. Gensler." Next we read on May 31, 1938 that *Follow the Sun*, "re-assigned for production to Harlan Thompson at Paramount from the Lew Gensler slate after latter terminated at studio, is getting new treatment and probably will be second on Thompson's list after *Paris Honeymoon*." It became more definite with *Variety* writing on June 13, 1938 that "Ken Englund has been assigned to write screen play on Paramount's *Follow the Sun*, Bing Crosby vehicle to be produced by Harlan Thompson." It was still live on August 11, 1938 when *Variety* stated that "Don Hartman and Frank Butler are on writing chore for *Follow the Sun*, which Harlan Thompson will produce." So did it ever come to fruition?

"Follow the Sun" 1937



Starring
BING CROSBY with George Burns and Gracie Allen, Lynne Overman. Made to the measure of that Crosby smash "We're Not Dressing", "Follow the Sun" shows Bing as the son of a big shot ship owner of the Northwest who leaves one of his old man's ships in the Orient to become the proprietor of the swaggiest night club from Manhattan to Mandalay. With Bing at the top of his popularity, an ace cast, an ace script, and a bunch of ace tunes, you can check the date "Follow the Sun" hits town as one of the biggest in the 1936-37 box-office calendar. Directed by Norman Taurog.

I was glancing at Fred Reynolds book "Road to Hollywood" and under *Road to Singapore*, I read "In 1939 a Paramount official found on the shelves a story called 'Beach of Dreams' by Harry Hervey, a mediocre but serious tale about a ship-owner's son and missionaries on a tropical island." Then the penny dropped. *Beach of Dreams* and *Follow the Sun* became *Road to Singapore* which was produced by Harlan Thompson! Don Hartman and Frank Butler wrote the screenplay. Amazing how long it took to come about but eventually it made history.

"It Happened in Paradise"



BING CROSBY and **IDA LUPINO** starring in a typical Crosby winner. This particular Paradise happens to be a mountain lake where a couple of summer camps, one full of lads and one full of gals, hold forth. And the one and only Bing Crosby is the leading lad in Camp No. 1. A big time song and dance show, this picture is planned to catch the late spring trade with a real summer camp musical... and with Ida Lupino, one of the smoothest gals in pictures, to step it along... it's sure to be a winner.

It Happened in Paradise was first mentioned by *Variety* on April 18, 1936 when they said; "Paramount has borrowed Arthur Sheekman and Nat Perrin from 20th-Fox to write the screen play for *It Happened in Paradise*. Arthur Hornblow will produce. Story is an original by Don Hartman and Karl Freund." The "Made to Measure Group" in *Variety* magazine on June 17, 1936 said that filming was planned for the first two quarters of 1937. I note that Arthur Hornblow produced *Waikiki Wedding* in 1937 and Don Hartman was one of

the writers so can we assume that *It Happened in Paradise* morphed into the former? I bet we can.



You get Crosby when Crosby's booming! He's just tied another knot around the American heart with his terrific "Sing, You Sinners!"... And now you get him for the box-office record cinch of the year!...

"THREE'S COMPANY"

with

BING CROSBY

Screenplay by Leonard Spiegelgass

Produced by
MILTON FELD



Finally, another clipping John spotted in *Film Daily* for November 28, 1938 read:

"Crosby Pix Title Changed"

Bing Crosby's Universal picture has been changed from "Three's Company" to "Eastside of Heaven," which is also the title of one of the principal songs in the picture.

It helps make sense of Bing's comment on the demo of the song (on the Good & Rare CD Vol. 3) that he thought the song would not be used. He did not know at that time that it was to be the title song. Filming started in January 1939.

Many thanks, John, for supplying these rare images. The *Follow the Sun* image has done much to expand the story of how the Road films eventually came about.

Bing and Elvis – Christmas 1957

ICC member Croft O'Toole has been doing some detailed research and he has put together an interesting article for us

The *Billboard* Christmas charts of 1957 reveal some interesting marketing strategies being deployed by Decca Records for Bing Crosby and RCA Records for Elvis Presley.

Decca modernized Crosby's top selling "Merry Christmas" album from an eight song 10" 33 1/3 rpm

disc to a 12", 12 song album. The label gave the LP a fresh look by featuring a new photograph of the handsome face of Bing wearing a Santa Claus hat against an all-white background.

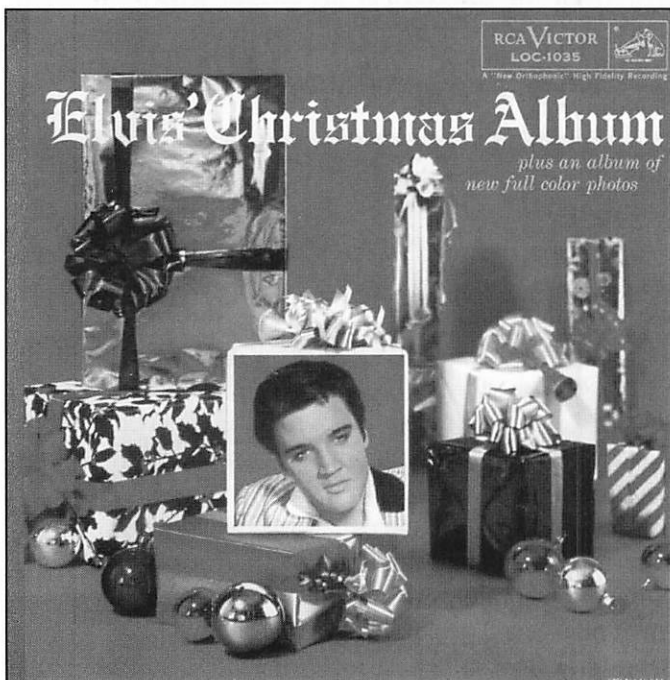
The album consisted, mostly, of his multi-million selling singles and itself had sold millions of copies in its various forms since first released in 1945.

The additional four songs were not new recordings by Bing, the latest being from 1951. Although there might not be many totally new customers ready to purchase another repackaging of old material, it seems the Crosby album would not be totally sidelined by the expected Elvis Presley Christmas LP from RCA. Decca's expanded Crosby record with its outstanding cover design would keep sales healthy for years.

RCA's new young star Elvis Presley was selling rock 'n roll and pop ballads in volumes unmatched by any one other than Bing at his peak. Presley's fan base of teenagers needed to be broader. RCA sought to reach new markets for Elvis without exposing his record sales to any real risks in new categories.

In the spring of 1957 RCA released Elvis' version of "Peace in the Valley" as a single which was included with three other sacred songs on an EP 45rpm album also entitled "Peace in the Valley". The risk paid off. Sales of the EP were quite respectable, although nowhere near the volume his pop records were achieving. It was evident that an album of Christmas songs would sell well enough to make the effort worthwhile.

The "Elvis' Christmas Album" as it was titled, contained the four sacred songs from the "Peace in the Valley" EP. These songs had already paid for themselves. Three of the LP's Christmas songs had been huge sellers for Bing as another had been for Gene Autry. Even "Blue Christmas" had been a country hit for Ernest Tubb.



Neither the Crosby nor the Presley LP was going to offer anything really new song wise. To ensure a place for Elvis in the Christmas song market, RCA needed to create some excitement and generate demand.

To accomplish this, RCA decided Elvis' album would contain a gatefold cover that would include ten pages of Elvis photographs in color. No singles from the LP would be released. If fans wanted a song such as "Blue Christmas, they would need to purchase either the LP or the EP.

A smash hit for either the Crosby or the Presley LP might have seemed unlikely. However "Elvis's Christmas Album" flew to #1 on the top 40 album charts. Bing's "Merry Christmas" album reached the No. 1 position also.

It was the first time two Christmas albums had reached the #1 spot on the album charts in the same year. This phenomenon was not repeated until 2013 when the Justin Bieber and Michael Bublé's albums both spent time in the top position.

In 1957 Crosby's and Presley's Christmas albums were each certified "Gold". Bing Crosby became the first person to have a number one album and a number one motion picture. Only Barbra Streisand has since equaled Bing in that particular accomplishment.



The Elvis album spent more weeks at No. 1 than did Bing's. It might be thought that Presley's record, therefore, had at least slightly better sales in 1957 than did Bing's. One should consider that while no singles were available from the Presley album, there were singles on the market from the Crosby LP.

Bing's single "White Christmas" charted at #34 on the Hot 100, "Silent Night" was at #54 and "Silver Bells" at #78. Bing's Kapp label single "How Lovely Is Christmas" reached #97.

The "Merry Christmas" EP was #9 on the EP chart. The sales of Christmas records in 1958 are also of

interest. RCA apparently did not release the EP version of the Elvis Christmas album as it did not chart in 1958. In 1957, it had reached #3 on the EP charts.

RCA removed the color photos of Elvis from his Christmas LP after the 1957 season. His album did not re-enter the top 40 until 1960 when it peaked at #33. It was the only top 40 entry of "Elvis's Christmas Album" until the CD era.

In 1958, Bing's "Merry Christmas" LP was #2 on the pop charts and #10 on the EP chart.

"Blue Christmas" by Elvis was not released as a single until 1964. Bing's "White Christmas" charted every year between 1957 and 1964. It was in the top 40 all but two of those years.

"Blue Christmas" eventually became a major seller for RCA. The Crosby version of "White Christmas" is still the best selling single record of all time. His "Merry Christmas" LP was the best-selling album of the pre compact disc era.

Since 1957 Crosby Christmas singles for various labels have charted at least briefly. Two of these have become classics. "Do You Hear What I Hear?" and "Peace on Earth / Little Drummer Boy", the duet with David Bowie.

The Presley single "If Every Day Was Like Christmas" entered the charts twice in the late 1960s.

Bing Crosby is rated as the #1 all-time seller of Christmas singles between the years 1920-2004. Elvis Presley is in a very respectable seventh place position.

Christmas album sales for the same time period place Crosby in the #2 position behind Mannheim Steamroller. Presley is third.

The image of Elvis Presley and his properties are aggressively protected and marketed. The sales of his recordings are audited, awards and statistics are publicized. "Duets" and new orchestral arrangements attract new and old fans and create interest in the vast catalog of Presley recordings. Unfortunately Bing's accomplishments past and present are under reported and under rated. Many still believe that Elton John's "Candle in the Wind" to be the top selling single of all time rather than "White Christmas". Bing's image has become gray like the cover photos on too many of his albums.

Croft O'Toole

(Editor: A personal view from Croft and one of the problems with publishing facts and figures of Bing's record sales is that the information is simply not available any more. Croft has done some diligent research here and the chart positions quoted are from the Billboard Pop or Hot 100 charts that rate all record sales – not Christmas charts that only compare Christmas record sales to each other. The charts and artist rankings are from "Joel Whitburn Presents: Christmas in the Charts 1920-2004" and "The

Billboard Book of Top 40 albums by Joel Whitburn".

I am ashamed to admit that I had to look up Mannheim Steamroller as I knew nothing about them!

The Presley album Croft discussed included a version of "White Christmas" and this caused some controversy at the time with calls by the song's composer Irving Berlin to have the song, and the entire album, banned from radio airplay. After hearing Presley's version of his song, which Berlin saw as a "profane parody of his cherished yuletide standard", he ordered his staff in New York to telephone radio stations across the United States, demanding the song be discontinued from radio play. While most US radio stations ignored Berlin's request, at least one disc jockey was fired for playing a song from the album, and most Canadian stations refused to play the album.

The controversy was, ironically, fueled by Elvis' performance of the song in a style mirroring the version by Clyde McPhatter's group, The Drifters, which had been a Top 10 hit on the R&B singles chart in 1954 and 1955. Unlike Elvis' recording, however, their version attracted virtually no adverse reaction, and certainly no reported opposition from Irving Berlin. Part of the reason that The Drifters' version of "White Christmas" was less controversial was because that version was played only on black radio stations. Elvis Presley's version brought greater attention to The Drifters' version which gained prominence with its inclusion in the 1990 movie "Home Alone".

Croft mentioned "Do You Hear What I Hear?"...)

Do You Hear What I Hear: classic born out of fear of nuclear war

Rev Dr Stephen Spence, Deputy Principal (Academic), at Tabor Adelaide in Australia, drew my attention to an article by Alan Howe in "The Australian" on December 30. I wonder how many of us knew the story behind this Crosby classic?

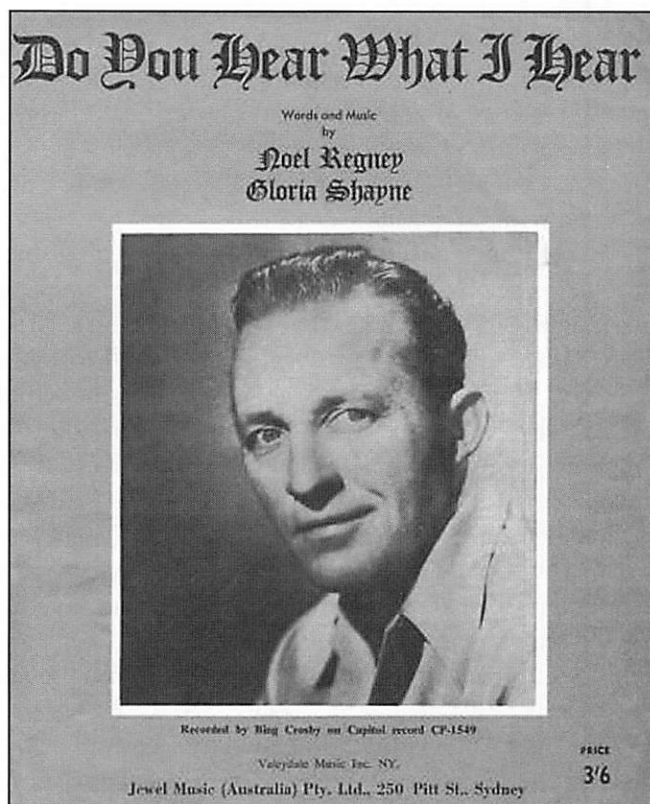
Husband and wife songwriting team Noel Regney and Gloria Shayne Baker were hot properties in the early 1960s. Between them they wrote songs recorded by the likes of Jo Stafford, Doris Day, Marlene Dietrich and Eddie Fisher. Among the songs they wrote were "Rain, Rain Go Away", a hit for Bobby Vinton, and "Goodbye Cruel World" for James Darren, both in 1961.

Regney would go on to write the English words for "Dominique", the French-language version of which was a No 1 record in 1962 for the ill-fated Belgian Jeanne Deckers, a woman most of the world knew only as the Singing Nun.

In October 1962 the pair was invited to write the B-side of a Christmas single to be recorded by the Harry Simeone Chorale. Simeone had arranged (and received an undeserved co-writing credit for) "The Little Drummer Boy" a few years earlier. It had been a huge

seller and the record company wanted a follow-up.

It was a week unlike any other: in response to the previous year's failed CIA-orchestrated Bay of Pigs invasion that hoped to overthrow Fidel Castro, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev placed nuclear missiles on Cuba, just 140km from Florida.



The Cold War had suddenly thawed. A defiant US president John F. Kennedy blockaded the island nation and demanded the weapons be decommissioned. His joint chiefs of staff wanted a full-scale invasion.

Kennedy's televised address to his nation — and Khrushchev's militant response — effectively put the superpowers on a war footing. The world held its breath.

Regney knew all about the horror of war. He'd been born in northern France and when his country was overrun by the Nazis he, like many others, was drafted into the German army. Risking all to stay in his German uniform while assisting his countrymen's resistance, he led a party of German soldiers into a trap in which he was — presumably purposely — shot and injured while they were mown down around him.

Depressed at what appeared to be an imminent return to war, Regney walked the streets of New York wondering if he had it in him to write an upbeat Christmas song.

"En route to my home, I saw two mothers with their babies in strollers," he recalled years later. "The little angels were looking at each other and smiling. All of a sudden my mood was extraordinary."

He looked at the newborns and imagined them as helpless lambs not even stained by original sin.

His first language was not English. Usually his wife wrote the words and Regney the music. But words — in

English — came to him:

Said the night wind to the little lamb, do you see what I see?

Way up in the sky, little lamb, do you see what I see?

A star, a star, dancing in the night with a tail as big as a kite.

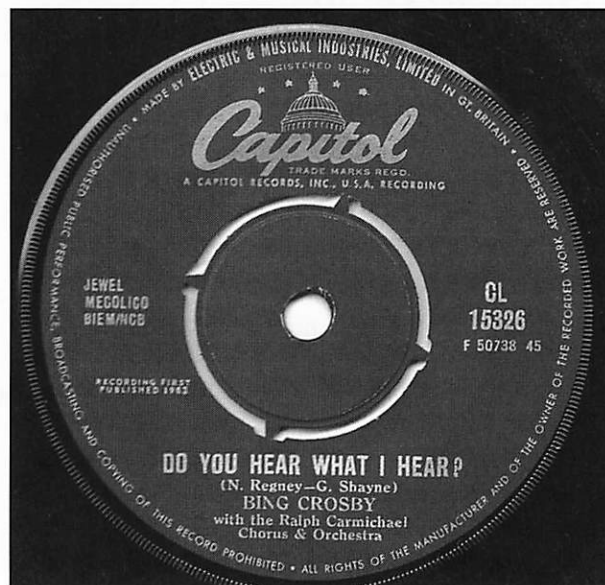
It was an ode for peace with a vision of an apocalypse. For "stars" read rockets with blazing tails on their way to the US east coast — and return fire aimed at Cuba. In the early years of the nuclear age this scenario was known as mutually assured destruction: its acronym, MAD, said it all.

Once home, Regney wrote down these words and asked his wife to compose music for them, reversing their usual roles.

One of her daughters later recalled that Baker, too, had been struck by inspiration while walking in the city. "My mother heard trumpets playing the melody in her head," she said.

So came together the constituent parts for the most successful Christmas song of the modern era.

The Harry Simeone Chorale single is reported to have sold 250,000 copies before that Christmas, but unaccountably did not appear on the Billboard chart.



The following year Bing Crosby recorded what must be considered the definitive version that has sold well ever since, helped by his performance of the song on that year's Bob Hope Christmas television special.

The rollcall of those who have interpreted it since is as extraordinary as it is varied: Perry Como, Glen Campbell, Kenny G, Celine Dion, the Carpenters, Delta Goodrem, Gladys Knight, Bob Dylan, Andy Williams, Susan Boyle, Whitney Houston, Johnny Mathis and Mahalia Jackson.

Who knows how many of them understood its underlying message?

"Noel wrote a beautiful song," his then wife later recalled, "and I wrote the music. We couldn't sing it, though; it broke us up. We cried. Our little song broke us up. You must realise there was a threat of nuclear war at

that time.”

Regney’s favourite version of the song was, reportedly, by Robert Goulet who, he believed, comprehended his words and consequently sang the command “pray for peace, people everywhere” with conviction.

There are those who believe Goulet sang “You Light Up My Life” at the 1978 Miss Universe contest with equal authority.

In 1985, Regney spoke to The New York Times about his greatest creation: “I am amazed that people can think they know the song — and not know it is a prayer for peace.”

Noel Regney died on November 22, 2002, the 39th anniversary of the assassination of JFK. His famous song was performed at his funeral.

A hundred years from now they probably will be singing “Do You Hear What I Hear” as a Christmas standard; whether anyone by then will link the song to the assassinated president remains to be seen.

Alan Howe

“SAY IT WITH MUSIC” (AND WORDS!)

Back in 1990, the late Lionel Pairpoint wrote an article for BING magazine about one of the greatest ever songwriters. His words are still valid today.

Some years ago, I was asked to write the sleeve note for an album entitled ‘Music! Music! Music!’ and I closed the piece (quite appositely, I smugly thought, at the time) with ‘...but let’s not overlook the words, the tools of the vocalist’s trade...’

I have always been fascinated by the artful synthesis of words and music that creates the popular song and I venture to suggest that had Bing ‘boo-booded’ or ‘scatted’ his way through all of his two thousand sides, he would not have had the number of admirers that he still has today.

The dictionary definition of ‘song’ is, ‘a poem set to music’ but most publications on the subject give short shrift to the lyric writers. The book, ‘You Must Remember This... (Popular Songwriters 1900-1980)’, is unpleasantly condescending with its casual references – ‘Dietz, Howard see Schwartz, Arthur’; ‘Dubin, Al see Warren, Harry’; ‘Gordon, Mack see Revel, Harry’ or, a little closer to home, ‘Burke, Johnny, see Van Heusen, Jimmy’!

Although I would not be prepared to agree, wholeheartedly, with Irving Caesar (‘Tea for Two’, ‘Swanee’, Just a Gigolo’ etc.) who said:

“What is a real lyric writer? He’s a fellow who can’t help singing and he sings through his words. A poet or a versifier - they must be satisfied to write their words down. But a lyricist - he’s a minstrel!”

...Believe me, if I could write music instead of lyrics, I’d be glad to, because it’s so much easier. Why, composers, even the great ones, ought to get down on their knees every day and say, ‘Thank God I’m a composer - it’s so easy. I can write a tune every hour of the day or night but thank God I don’t have to write the words!’”

I do, however, find a certain affinity with Dorothy Hammerstein who, on becoming so irritated when hearing the song, repeatedly introduced as, “Jerome Kern’s ‘Ol’ Man River”, was stung into uttering the icy remark, “Jerome Kern wrote ‘Dah, Dah, Dee Dum’ – my husband wrote ‘Ol’ Man River’”!

Being a stickler for giving credit where credit is due, no one is more aware than I of the jaw breaking possibilities in De Sylva, Brown & Henderson’s, ‘The Best Things in Life Are Free’ or even, Turk, Crosby & Ahlert’s, ‘Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day’! So, it affords some vocabular relief to mention, Irving Berlin’s, ‘Blue Skies’ as, apart from some early collaborations, Berlin was always responsible for both ingredients. Considered to be less witty than Cole Porter and without the concert hall aspirations of Gershwin, he relied upon the simplicity of his words, set to easily hummable tunes, to maintain a position in the front rank of songwriters for seven decades.

He had taken his first, probationary steps into show business before Bing Crosby was born but the paths of their careers were to touch, on many occasions, often to mutual advantage.

Bing appeared in four films scored by Irving Berlin. The only one that I may have to remind you of might be *Reaching for the Moon*. The film was originally intended to be a musical, for which Berlin had written five songs but the only vocal used was ‘When the Folks High up Do the Mean Low Down’, sung by Bing in his ‘walk on’ part. This would be a good moment to refer to the *Philco Radio Time* broadcast of 7th May 1947 in which Irving Berlin featured as Bing’s guest. A portion of the dialogue runs thus:

B.C. *‘The first tune I ever mangled in a picture was written by you’*

I.B. *‘I don’t know what song or what picture you’re talking about’*

B.C. *‘I just sang the song off-stage (and off key, I might add!) - In my first screen effort, I never did get in front of the camera’*

Any ideas, out there? Or was this just an example of scriptwriter’s licence?

At the time of Berlin’s centenary in 1988, a review was undertaken to establish how many of his songs, Bing Crosby had recorded. Without reference, I believe there were around 60 titles but I wonder, if when he produced one of his best efforts in the Sixties, for the Longines Symphonette set, was Bing surprised to discover that he had ‘missed out’, previously, on such

'standards' as, 'Always', 'Remember', 'What'll I Do' and 'All Alone'?

And it transpired that no less than a quarter of the 36 tracks that he taped for this album were Berlin songs. Or, had he been attempting, for some time, to rectify some of these omissions, bearing in mind that six more titles were included on the unissued 'Sing-Along' records?



Irving Berlin guests on the Philco show.

We are able to listen to a further small legacy of Berlin's tunes from Bing's various radio series - 'When the Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam'; 'Someone Else May Be There'; 'Tell Me, Little Gypsy'; 'Any Bonds Today?' and 'Call Me up Some Rainy Afternoon' - all from *Kraft Music Hall*. A duet, with Judy Garland, of the last song was featured in the Chesterfield series, together with, 'Let's Take an Old-Fashioned Walk' and 'You're Just in Love' (another duet with Judy Garland and incongruously but nonetheless welcome, a version with Louis Armstrong). The same song turned up on General Electric, this time with Rosemary Clooney.

From *Philco Radio Time* we can hear, 'I Want to Go Back to Michigan' (with Beatrice Lillie); 'A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody' (with Al Jolson); 'I Got the Sun in the Morning' and 'I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm' which was repeated in his last regular radio series with Buddy Cole, along with 'A Man Chases a Girl'.

Irving Berlin was said to be 'a creator of anthems' and there seems to be ample evidence to convince us -. 'Easter Parade' is one of the ten most popular and financially profitable songs of all time. In the 1950's, 'God Bless America' was chosen in a national poll as the most famous patriotic song in America and there was even a movement, set in motion, for it to replace, 'The

Star Spangled Banner'. How many bathing beauties have teetered along the catwalk to the strains of, 'A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody'? What more perfect 'curtain' song than, 'There's No Business Like Show Business' and how would we get through December without 'White Christmas'?

A weighty tome could be written about this song, alone - the overwhelming mass of (sometimes conflicting) statistics, covering sales and recordings - a cantor's son, writing a song about a Christian festival. The colossal conceit of the composer, "Not only is it the best song I ever wrote, it's the best song anybody ever wrote"! The mental picture that we have of Bing, removing his pipe from his mouth and saying, "You don't have to worry about this one Irving" and of the day he was scheduled to sing 'White Christmas' before the cameras, when Berlin was apprehended, crouching behind the set, reluctant to 'let go' of his precious song. The disappointment of the song-pluggers when they first saw the sheet music, complaining that only Crosby would be able to pronounce the word 'Christmases' with the necessary ease and their further arguments that they were being swindled out of a verse when the composer instructed that this should be cut from his song on all future copies. Berlin's chagrin, when, always ready to sue parodists, he discovered the troops of North Africa were singing, 'I'm Dreaming of a White Mistress' - His dislike of versions of the song by Elvis Presley and the British group, Darts (maybe because the sheet music suggests, 'Slowly, with expression'!). And finally, the Oscar ceremonies of 1942, when, self-effacing, as ever, he presented the Best Song Award to himself, with the words, "This goes to a nice guy; I've known him all my life".

I didn't know Mr. Berlin well enough to vouch for the veracity of this statement but I can say, without hesitation, that he was certainly a guy who could write nice songs.

To the day he died, Irving Berlin refused to allow any biography or biopic of his life. Alexander Woolcott managed to write one in 1925 (little did he know that there were another 64 years to go!) but now the definitive volume has been published by Hodder & Stoughton. A 'must' for any student of popular song and from which some of the foregoing material has been drawn - Make a note of 'As Thousands Cheer' by Lawrence Bergreen.

The best testimonial that I can offer to Irving Berlin (and his contemporaries), is to quote the chorus of a song by the young, soul singer Terence Trent D'Arby:

*'The thorns outnumber the petals on the rose
And the darkness amplifies the sound of printer's ink
On propaganda page*

That will rule your life and fuel my wage'

Well, you've got the words - All together now! - Unless, of course, you prefer 'Blue Skies'.

Lionel Pairpoint

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

Mike O'Donoghue, Romford, Essex, UK

I was turning out a box of old photos in my garage recently and to my surprise renewed acquaintance with some of the early photos I took way back in the fifties. The camera cost me thirty shillings and was the first one I had ever owned.

The newspapers had informed us that Bing and Bob Hope would be donating their services on Sunday October 25, 1952 at Temple Golf Club, Maidenhead, Berks for the Playing Fields Association. My cousin accompanied me with an equally ancient camera in the hope that we might be lucky enough to get some photos of these two famous stars of Hollywood.

The crowd had gathered outside the Club House while the Paramount pair had a meal along with Donald Peers and Ted Ray. A loudspeaker gave forth with popular songs...all Bing's of course, so we were all in a genial mood whilst we waited.

At last they filed down the narrow passage formed by the admiring fans. I was behind a wall of bodies and my hopes of getting any decent shots were fading, then I noticed the press and many other photographers were holding their cameras with arms held high above the heads of the jostling mob. I copied them and when days later I collected my snaps was delighted to have a few reasonable prints which I enclose.



One of Mike's photos showing Bing and Bob with British singer Donald Peers.

The crowd made any hope of playing serious golf out of the question. Eight holes were cancelled. They just wanted to get near the celebrities and had no respect for the immaculate greens. I could hear Bob pleading with them "Please...you...you...people!" But nevertheless a happy experience.

Nancy Graev, by email to Greg Van Beek from Marco Island, Florida, USA

I just finished reading your article with memories of Ken Barnes in BING magazine. While I never was able to meet him I have his book *The Crosby Years* and am very much aware of his importance in Bing's career. Last December I was thrilled to watch *American Masters: Bing Revisited* on PBS. I was thrilled so see Ken talking about Bing's recording career. He will be missed.

I have been a fan of Bing's since I was a child. My father would play his 78rpm records of Bing's for me when I was a child. I still have those records.

I am privileged to know Kathryn and very grateful to you for all your work in keeping Bing's name alive. You actually helped me years ago when I was in the midst of collecting everything Crosby. My collection has since gone to Gonzaga and a gentleman in New Orleans who lost his Crosby collection in hurricane Katrina. I was blessed to be able to give.

Warmest regards and keep up the great work!

Roger Addey, Camborne, Cornwall, UK

I am writing to say how sorry I am to hear of the death of Ken Barnes. He was a really friendly gentleman, and I can look back with pleasure at the time we had breakfast together all those years ago when I came to the Leeds meeting. His talks were always humorous especially with his directing of Bing and Fred Astaire! He will be sadly missed.

I have now finished reading about the 50th celebration at Leeds, how interesting the evening must have been.

The magazine continues to be very interesting with the many stories about Bing and his quite phenomenal success.

Charles Wilkinson, Belfast, Northern Ireland, UK

My grateful thanks to you and all the team for your great work on behalf of the Crosby cause. It was in the summer of 1945 – over 70 years ago – that I was first enchanted by Bing's voice. I heard it coming from a 78 Brunswick playing on a wind-up gramophone. The song

was "Trade Winds" and I loved it immediately.

I loved the way Bing sang it and as I said – enchanted by his voice. If I had to pick one of Bing's songs it would have to be "Trade Winds".

Ian Patience, Woodford Green, London, UK

The latest BING has been read and as usual it makes excellent reading. It was sad to read of the passing of Ken Barnes – what a debt we owe him for all his efforts for Bing so late in his career. It comes through in Greg Van Beek's tribute – what a kind and likeable man he must have been and I am sure that all those who were lucky enough to have worked with him will remember him with affection.

On a happier note I found Keith Parkinson's article on the making of *King of Jazz* very interesting. I have heard on the grapevine that there will be an American DVD issue of it taken from an almost pristine original copy which has recently been discovered. I understand that is likely to be issued this spring.

Another memory stirred was the item on Perry Como's tribute to Bing on his 50s TV show which I clearly remember watching on a Bush 9" screen. It made such an impression and I now know that "Somebody Else Is Taking My Place" was from a KMH in 1942. Bing's voice sounded so well that I had mistakenly thought it was a 30s recording, so that clears up yet another little query!

Lars Schinnerling, by email from Lagen, Germany

One of my favorite radio programs has always been "Your Hit Parade". I recently read in an old article from "Variety" that Ginny Simms was on YHP in March, 1942. I knew she was on that program for several weeks in 1947 but 1942 was absolutely new to me. Due to the various lawsuits the tobacco industry went through in the United States, a plethora of documents were made available to the public. Among those are, strangely enough, the scripts of YHP from the mid-30 to the mid-40s. So it didn't take me long to find the information I was looking for.

Out of curiosity, I checked for the guest stars who were on during the other weeks. Now it became clear to me why so many claimed to have sung on the Hit Parade! There were Kate Smith (twice), Dorothy Lamour, Connie Boswell, Dinah Shore, the Andrews Sisters and also Bing Crosby! I checked online under his "Sundry Guest Appearances 1936-1946" and there it rightfully was all the time!!

I noticed, however, that there is no mention of the songs he sang during the occasion and this was probably unknown as none of these shows have survived to the best of my knowledge. So, maybe our fellow Bing fans like to know it. He sang three songs: one "Lucky Strike Extra", "How About You" from M-G-M's *Babes on Broadway*, # 4 "Blues in the Night" and the # 3 song "Rose O'Day."

You may want to check what he said during the occasion as well. There were some heavy script changes!

<https://industrydocuments.library.ucsf.edu/tobacco/docs/#id=smb0020>

Frans van der Kolff, by email from The Netherlands

Thank you very much for your occasional mails with interesting Crosby information. At the moment, I am enjoying Bing Crosby Internet Radio! While my interest in Bing always remained and I bought the new films and CD's, my interest was rekindled by the very enjoyable meeting at Leeds in October. Thank you again for that! Now I feel sorry for myself that I only attended the Leeds meetings three times! Entirely my own fault of course.

I quite regularly surf the internet looking for new things Crosby and occasionally I come across items which might be of interest. I take the liberty to mention some of them. I do hope you don't know them yet! For instance, there's a 'hospital show' online on a website named 'Rands Esoteric OTR':

<http://randsesotericotr.podbean.com/category/christmas-related/>

When you scroll down a bit, you come to an item named 'VA Hospital Christmas Show 1955' which is assumed to be 'not a radio broadcast per se, since it was probably played over a closed circuit pa system'. The show features holiday greetings from Bing Crosby, Bob Hope and Dinah Shore, along with the director of the Veteran's Administration.

If you look to the right, you see there's an entry for Bing in the index which contains more interesting material.

Are you aware of the radio show 'Best of All'? The broadcast of October 4th, 1954 features Irving Berlin and a very large part of the show is devoted to the 'making of' of the film *White Christmas*. There's even a short transcribed interview with Bing included. You can find the show here: <http://otrlibrary.org/OTRRLib/Library%20Files/B%20Series/Best%20Of%20All/>

I understand you are probably aware of these items, but I wanted to let you know - just in case. When you take the time to look around on the net, it's astonishing what you can find; the above are just a few of the items I came across over the years.

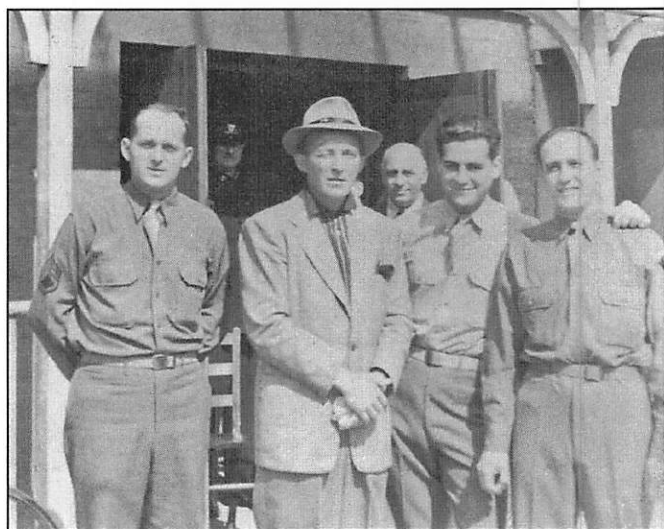
(Editor: Some excellent research from Frans. The Hospital Show in particular was new to me and I was interested to note that the songs used came from a 1952 GE show. I would guess that the actual greetings from Bing and Dinah Shore had been newly recorded in 1955 though.)

John Whitehead, Hornchurch, Essex, UK

As discussed in our telephone conversation yesterday, please find enclosed a photograph of Bing with Sgt Johnny Desmond and other singers from The Crew Chiefs, outside the entrance of the Co-partners

Hall in Bedford in August 1944.

The picture was taken by the owner of the fish and chip shop which was at the end of the road leading to the hall. It supplements the well-known photo of Bing with Glenn Miller and arranger Jerry Gray also taken by the same gentleman.



Johnny Desmond is on Bing's left – our right as we look at it.

It was given to me by the daughter who said I could send it to the editor of the Glenn Miller Society magazine, which I never got round to doing.

Hope this is of interest.

(Editor: Many thanks, John. Amazing what turns up! Members will recall that Johnny Desmond and The Crew Chiefs worked with Glenn Miller in 1944. Johnny Desmond enjoyed a number of chart successes in the post-war years.)

A Note from Australia

Graham Pascoe writes from Bathurst, NSW, Australia:

First of all, thank you to Malcolm for drawing my attention to Crosby Christmas Internet Radio. I spent some time listening to it, getting into the Christmas spirit with the aid of some interesting selections of Bing's Christmas songs (and some others).

Some of the recordings I heard had some special significance for Australia. For example, 'Children' was one of the last Crosby singles released here, coupled with 'At My Time of Life' on a United Artists disc. Bing's recording of 'Silent Night, Holy Night' (coupled with 'Adeste Fideles') was his biggest-selling single here: the 1942 recording released on Decca in 1944 sold 89,234 copies and the earlier 1935 recording sold another 11,123 from 1936 to 1945. They sold more than double the Aussie Decca with 'White Christmas'.

On December 22 an issue of our national daily newspaper THE AUSTRALIAN reported that the State

government of Victoria was reducing the likelihood of school children being exposed to recordings of those two Christmas carols or hymns by Bing or anyone. The principal of every public (that is, government) school in Victoria has been directed to ban 'praise music', defined as 'any type of music that glorifies God or a particular religious figure or deity' from the classroom from January 2016. Apparently, it is part of an attempt to secularise schools. As the author of the newspaper article concluded his article, '... while I'm still able to say it - Merry Christmas!'

Bing received some attention from Australian media during the festive season. I'm told that *White Christmas* was telecast on pay-TV on Christmas Day. Between Christmas and New Year our national daily newspaper *The Australian* included each day a series titled 'Behind the music: Great songs of the 20th century' by Alan Howe and the 30 December issue was sub-titled 'Call it Mad, but a classic was born out of fear of nuclear war'. It told the story of how in 1962 the husband and wife songwriting team Noel Regney and Gloria Shayne Baker came to write 'Do You Hear What I Hear?' and this article has already been reproduced elsewhere in this issue of BING.

Bing's recording of this Christmas classic was released in Australia in 1963 backed by 'Christmas Dinner Country Style' and reached the Australian charts in December, remaining for seven weeks. Australians had the opportunity to see Bing sing it when the Bob Hope show was telecast here on prime time in February 1964. Well, they thought they saw Bing sing it but *The Chronological Bing Crosby on Television* tells us that Bing actually lip-synched to his 1963 recording.

As I read Bob Halls' report on the final Leeds Dinner/Meeting I wished that I'd been able to attend and enjoy the presentations and fellowship but there was some Aussie presence through the attendance of David Currington and Ron Field. 'Bing and His Ladies of Song' by Perry Huntoon includes his opinion that Rhonda Fleming's acting ability was better than her singing talent. Bing's solo recording of 'Once and for Always' was not released as a single here but his duet with Fleming was, backed with her vocal 'When Is Sometime?' Neither was a hit in Australia and one highly respected reviewer thought that she had a tendency to sing flat. Bing's duet with Evelyn Knight on 'Everywhere You Go' was in our charts for 25 weeks, reaching number six.

Some of the subject matter of other articles had special relevance to Australia, the first being your meeting with Phil Crosby Jr. and not just because he'd visited Australia as a backpacker. His father, Phillip Crosby, performed here in 1965. The Sydney newspaper *The Sun-Herald* gave him some special attention in August with an advertisement publicising his show at The Silver Spade Room at the prominent Chevron Hotel introducing him as 'one of the Crosby boys'. One week

later it was followed by an article headlined 'Being Bing's son only opens the door'. It described Phillip's interest in football, his career with his brothers and then as a solo act.

The birth of Phillip and Dennis had escaped the attention of the Australian press in 1934 but in 1956 just before the first screening in Sydney of the new version of *Anything Goes* the music magazine *Tempo* published a photo of Bing and Phillip on the set of the film. Just over three years later in Melbourne *The Herald* Phillip and his three brothers were noted as being 'featured' on a Bob Hope show, as well as Dean Martin and Natalie Wood, to be telecast in November.



Sir Boss gets to know Lady Alisande in Connecticut Yankee.

In 1961 Bing's first TV special for the year was shown in May and *The Sydney Morning Herald* gave it a big write-up headed 'Crosby, Sons and Como'. It told readers that the Crosby boys would sing 'Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho' with Bing and a medley. (Gary's absence was attributed to an infected throat.)

Phillip was back in Australia in 1966 and 1968 but on these occasions he was on the small screen as the 1935 movie *Redheads on Parade* in which he and Dennis made their film debuts were shown on television three times. In June 1968 the same newspaper noted that he would be seen as guest on Bob Hope's Christmas show (yes, in June) and he was to be a guest on two *Hollywood Palace* shows in July and August.

Keith Parkinson's contribution on *King of Jazz* was informative and I was reminded of the film's introduction to Australia in June 1930. Before then it had been advertised heavily to cinema owners in a trade magazine *Everones*. The advertisements for its opening in Sydney centred on Paul Whiteman, John Boles and others but made no mention of The Rhythm Boys or Bing. Reviewers were impressed, describing it as 'gorgeous and entertaining' and 'another winner'. After

it was screened in Brisbane to 'a standing-room only audience' it was described as 'a musical extravaganza with extraordinary features ... special effects ... natural colourings'. When the new version of *King of Jazz* was shown in 1933 the ads featured Bing, John Boles and Jeanette Loff with no mention of Paul Whiteman.

Special thanks to Sally Monaghan for the article on *High Tor*. My research suggests that it has never been shown on Australian television, nor has *King of Jazz*.

One of the biggest news items this year has been the death of David Bowie. It was followed by a great deal of media attention, reminiscent (but not quite as impressive) as that which followed the death of Bing in 1977. Bing's *Merrie Olde Christmas* had been shown on Aussie TV in December of that year but the only reference I found to Bing's duet with David Bowie this month was in *The Sydney Morning Herald* online which noted that he had sung on Bing's TV Special.

I was in the Bathurst library recently and a new book on the shelf caught my eye, not only because of its size (about 29 x 25 cm pages) but also because of its striking cover. It's *BOWIE: The Story of Rock's Enduring Enigma*, written by Mike Evans, published by Carlton Books, London in 2015. Its 96 pages are dominated by photos, many in glorious colour, rather than text. Needless to say, I turned to the chapter on the mid-1970s and on page 43 found a black-and-white photo of Bing and Bowie captioned 'Appearing with the legendary vocalist Bing Crosby, on the crooner's TV Christmas special recorded in September 1977'.

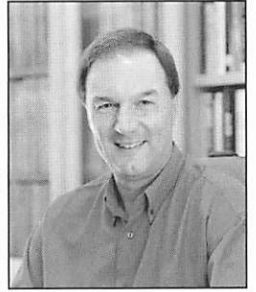
When I borrowed it I didn't plan to read it but I'm actually finding it quite interesting. What a contrast in the eras represented by Bing and Bowie.

The following Friday, the 'Letters to the editor' page of the newspaper included an unusual brief note from a reader in New South Wales. A recent public opinion poll had revealed that the leader of the opposition in State parliament, Luke Foley, was far behind his rival, Premier Mike Baird, in approval rating. It prompted the reader to suggest 'Luke Foley must identify with Bing Crosby, who bemoaned the fact that he was born in the same era as Frank Sinatra'.

Graham Pascoe



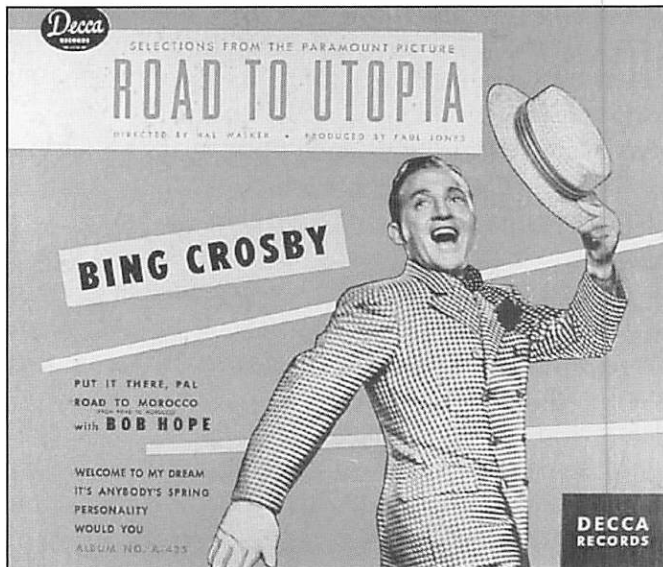
CROSBYANA



Ken Crossland has been on a "Road" trip.

My winter travels this year took me on a cruise to various stopping points in Vietnam. It was only when I came to assemble my listening material for the trip that I realised that Vietnam was secondary. I had actually booked a "Road" cruise. How else could a journey that would start in Singapore and end in Hong Kong be badged?

A playlist of "Road movie" songs seemed to be *de rigueur* and yet there is no obvious place to find one. *The Road to Hong Kong* was of course post-Paramount and post-Decca, so you can understand why that might be left out (there was indeed a stand-alone soundtrack album), but how curious that Decca, in all the years of producing 12" LP compilations, never used the Road films as a theme. To be fair, Decca did put together some 78rpm albums and 10" LPs of songs from three of the films and there was a soundtrack compilation back in the early days of CDs, but no full compilation of commercial recordings from all the Road films. How strange.



Once assembled, my playlist revealed a strange inconsistency about the music that accompanied the madcap shenanigans with Hope. Noel Murray's conclusion, elsewhere in this issue, that *Road to Morocco* is the best film chimes with my view that musically, it is also head and shoulders above the rest. Only three songs, one a classic Bing and Bob duet, the second a ballad, and the third the ultimate strolling player song, but all of them top of their respective genres.

As for the rest, it's a mixed bag. "Too Romantic" and "It's Always You" were pleasant ballads in the first two outings, but both worked better on the screen than on record. The same goes for "To Know You Is to Love You" from "Bali", with Hope's put down of Bing as a

"collapsible Como" at the end of the song possibly the most memorable part. Noel ranks "Utopia" high as a film, but musically, it was a disaster. "Welcome to My Dreams" is a turgid ballad and "It's Anybody's Spring" is one of the weakest of Bing's sunshine-salesman songs. Some would see "Put It There, Pal" as the ultimate Crosby-Hope duet but on record, it was little more than a mutual promotion of their then radio shows, one of which, Bing on Kraft, was over almost as soon as the disc was released. The album of duets, planned for the month after Bing's passing, would surely have given us a more durable version, as well as a better quality "Teamwork", for me the best Hope and Crosby song, but flawed by the poor sound quality of the recording. That leaves "Rio", the only film to me, other than "Morocco", to give us some memorable discs. "But Beautiful", always the favourite Bing track of the much-missed British collector, Charlie Tupper, pushes "Moonlight Becomes You" close in the best Road film ballad stakes, whilst The Andrews Sisters collaboration on "You Don't Have to Know the Language" loses a lot when it is removed from the film setting, but is saved by the vocal interplay between Bing and the three girls.

So, perhaps Decca were right to leave a "Road" LP out of its reissue series. I was still musing on this as our cruise got underway. The ship's company included a group of six young singers, all very talented, two classically trained and four more mainstream popular singers. Three of the four were drawn to the musical stage for their material, but the odd one out was a young Irish singer from Dublin. Early into the cruise, he offered his own solo show called "Rat Pack & Swing". I chatted to Patrick, the young Irishman, after his show. His material drew heavily on Sinatra and Dean Martin, although he was young enough to have just "discovered" Matt Monro! Tongue in cheek, I asked him how any self-respecting Irishman could do a show without at least one Crosby song. His reply knocked me back on my heels. "Ken," he said, "I would love to, but which of Bing's songs would fit into a swing show with this band?" "Leave it with me," I said, and retired to my cabin to muse further.

One tangent to this of course is what exactly do we mean by swing and is it something different from jazz? It's an issue for pedants perhaps and I vividly remember, when Malcolm and I were doing our book on Rosemary Clooney, we were forced to jump into the debate as to whether she was or wasn't a "jazz singer". Her cornetist, Warren Vaché, was happy to offer an opinion but dismissed the debate as "the kind of thing old men talk about". But the pedant in me can't resist. Most of the

reference sources say that swing is a part of jazz, a 1930s development of the genre led by the big bands of the day. And if there is a difference from “pure” jazz, it is that swing is orchestrated, a distinction that resonates because for I am forever taking issue with people who describe Sinatra as a jazz singer. He wasn't, because he relied entirely on precise orchestrations. The result was a series of standout swing albums in the Fifties, but he had none of the innate sense of rhythm and natural phrasing that sustained Bing throughout his career. By the same token, Bing never seemed comfortable in front of a highly orchestrated big band, at least not until Ken Barnes came along.



Buddy Bregman at work with Bing

But back to Patrick's challenge. Where would you look for the answer? Well, “Bing Swings Whilst Bregman Swings” is the obvious starting point and the more I listen to that album, the better it seems to get. Bing sings differently on those 12 tracks to almost any other set of recordings because he sings on the beat. Usually, Bing is just behind the beat. It might limit Bing's phrasing slightly but it puts him front on to band, almost for the only time. But what else? The Pete Moore albums? Well, maybe, but despite them having 20 years on the Bregman disc, many of the tracks sound more dated. “Looking at You” is a wonderfully delivered vocal, ahead of a for once, understated Pete Moore arrangement and “Yours Sincerely” falls into the same category. Both of them came from the first sessions with Pete Moore in February 1975 when perhaps the arrangements were a little more reserved than what followed later.

I put these ideas back to Patrick and provided him with the tracks. He came back immediately, taken with “Heat Wave” from the Bregman album, and asking for more. “Did he do any more albums for Verve?” Patrick asked. I could only sigh and wish. Where else to look? The Mosaic treasure trove perhaps but that material is jazz rather than swing, if you accept my distinction. In the end, I found myself going to an obvious, but easily

overlooked source - “Bing 'n Basie” from 1972. Some of the vocals are a little ragged at the edges, but there are some gems - the swinging treatment of “Sunrise, Sunset”, the precise vocal timing of “Hangin' Loose” but above all, the gorgeous “Sugar, Don't You Know”, as good a record as any that Bing made throughout the Seventies. I copied it to Patrick and asked him to tell me what he thought. He came back a day later. “It's a masterclass in vocal phrasing,” he said, “I can't wait to sing it.” It was nice to be the provider of some old tricks for a new dog.

Ken Crossland ken54@blueyonder.co.uk

(Editor: A fascinating article from Ken. Makes me wonder if a CD compilation of all the commercial recordings from the Road films might still be interesting, especially if it could be boosted by some related radio and soundtrack songs.)

The Parting Glass: An Irish Journey

This is the name of a one-man cabaret play by Damien Leith, the *Australian Idol* winner, which has been touring Australia and was put on at The Street Theatre in Sydney on July 18 last year. *The Sydney Morning Herald* of July 7 told us more.

Set in an Irish pub, Leith says *The Parting Glass* revolves around a father and a son who haven't seen each other for five years. “The son went off to Australia, and once he got there he completely dropped off the face of the earth,” Leith says. “He didn't get in touch. He basically vanished. And now five years on he's back home in Ireland, and the father and the son have a lot to catch up on.”

Going hand in hand with the play is an album Leith released back in March 2015, called *Songs from Ireland*. Reaching number 11 on the ARIA Albums Chart, *Songs from Ireland* was in part a reaction to how well the songs in *The Parting Glass* were being received. The album closes with a rather unique duet, where Leith shares a beyond the grave collaboration with Bing on “Galway Bay”.

“It was one of those crazy suggestions that somebody makes, that you think, ‘There is no way this is going to happen’. But it did,” says Leith. “One of us, I can't remember if it was me or maybe my manager or someone at Sony, turned around and said, ‘Hey, what do you think the chances are that we could do a duet with the original Bing recording’. We got in touch with the Bing Crosby estate, it had to go through them, and over the course of a couple of months and a lot of work in between, we did demos, we did different versions of the song to make sure they knew what we were doing...but they were great to work with, they came on board and really embraced the whole thing.”

(Editor: A video featuring Damien and Bing singing “Galway Bay” can be found on YouTube. Search for “Damien Leith - Galway Bay ft. Bing Crosby”. The version used in “A Little Bit of Irish” is employed.)

BING ON THE BOX

Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights - USA & Canada

Crosby films and other items seen on TV since last time include:

A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court	TCM
Bing Crosby: Rediscovered	PBS
Blue Skies	TCM
Going My Way	TCM
Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank	TCM
High Society	TCM
Holiday Inn	Hallmark
Robin and the 7 Hoods	TCM
That's Entertainment	TCM
White Christmas	AMC & SUNDe

In addition, special delights were the broadcasts by *getTV* of a couple of Crosby shows. "Bing Crosby and the Sounds of Christmas", Bing's 1971 Christmas show, was seen on several occasions and it had Mary Costa, Robert Goulet and the Crosby family as the guest stars. Unfortunately though, the entire "cop and the anthem" sketch with Bing as a hobo was cut.

Then on February 15, came "The Bing Crosby Special" featuring Bob Hope, Diana Ross and The Supremes, Stella Stevens and José Feliciano. This NBC special, filmed on the Paramount Pictures lot originally aired October 23, 1968. It has only been in circulation in very poor quality since the days of VHS, so to be able to see it looking as it should was very welcome.



Singing "Mama Don't Allow It" with José Feliciano

Sadly however, Bing and The Supremes singing "Eleanor Rigby", "Hey Jude", "And I Love Her", and "The Fool on the Hill"

were all cut from the hit songs medley. We can't have everything!

getTV also transmitted the 1983 Grace Kelly biopic starring Cheryl Ladd in which an actor portrays Bing during the filming of *The Country Girl*.

David Lobosco spotted another Bing appearance on January 30 and he wrote "I just happened to turn tv on and the Screen Actors Guild Awards was on. They were giving a lifetime achievement award to Carol Burnett - who is one of my favorite people of all-time, and they actually showed a quick second clip of Carol with Bing! Bing is still making the awards show even in 2016!"

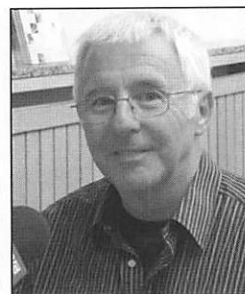
USA & Canadian Radio

Crosby Christmas Internet Radio

Most welcome was the return of Crosby Christmas Internet Radio on December 1st. This was broadcast 24/7 by Bing Crosby Enterprises and it featured all manner of Bing's songs and seasonal programs. As last year, it made the channel a very pleasant accompaniment to our activities in the run-up to Christmas and the New Year Beautifully put together with frequent links from Arne Fogel, we heard classic Crosby holiday radio programs, *GI Journal* and Minute Maid shows, the 1945 'Road to Berlin' broadcast, Kraft songs, "The Small One" and of course, his holiday recordings. In addition, we heard the annual *Christmas Sing with Bing* programs featuring guests like Rosemary Clooney, Johnny Mercer and Maurice Chevalier, extracts from the Bing's Basement series as well as little known spots like Bing's Christmas 1949 guest appearance on *The Monica Whelan Show*, a local Los Angeles radio program.

When I read on Facebook that Crosby Christmas Internet Radio was available, I circulated as many of members as possible so that they could enjoy the many rare items broadcast. Also, I put a note on Crosby Fan World encouraging listeners to write to BCE to thank them so that there might be a repeat next year. Then on January 15 came the wonderful news, which we have already mentioned, that **Crosby Internet Radio** had been launched and was available for free 24/7 at www.bingcrosby.com. This is a most important development which I know will be welcomed by all members.

Greg Van Beek's weekly radio series *Nostalgia Radio Time* on 1420 AM WJUB has continued its long run on Saturday nights starting at 9 pm (CST) / 10 pm (ET). Greg always has a "Bing Sings" segment in the



hour-long program and on November 7, he played the Crosby - Clooney Show from the same date in 1961. Greg duly celebrated the 100th Birthday of the Chairman of the Board, Frank Sinatra, on his show on December 19 and his 14th annual Bing Crosby Christmas Special followed the following week. As always, Greg played many of Bing's Christmas songs including some of those infrequently heard such as "Round and Round the Christmas Tree" and "Christmas Is".

You can catch Greg online at the www.1420thebreeze.com site or you can listen to the previous two weeks shows by going to the website and clicking on the 'audio archives' link.

On December 19, Greg popped up on his friend Ronnie Paul Jr.'s *Flying Home* TV show over Fresno, California's Cocola Broadcasting to talk about Bing.

Arne Fogel's weekly radio program "The Bing Shift" is still being broadcast on Sundays at 8 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota. It can now be accessed on demand at <http://kbem.podbean.com/?s=The+Bing+Shift> and it's essential listening.

Jack Boyle's BING for the SEASONS show also had a Christmas special on December 6 with an encore presentation on Christmas Day at noon. There was a nice selection including songs such as "The White World of Winter", "Mele Kalikimaka" "Do You Hear What I Hear" and "The Secret of Christmas". Jack continued with "Songs for the New Year" in January and he had fun playing on the idea of New Year's Resolutions (that we all make and usually don't keep), and positive approaches as illustrated in the song choices including "Let's Start the New Year Right" and "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive". In February the theme was "Songs for My Valentine" and Jack played some of the most memorable love songs by Bing, Rosemary Clooney and others such as "The Possibility's There" (with Peggy Lee), "You're Just in Love" (with Rosie), "Mine" with Judy Garland, "Secret Love" and "Unchained Melody". In March, Jack plans "Songs of Ireland" as a nod to St. Patrick's Day.

The program now airs twice monthly, the first Sunday of the month at 7 pm, with an Encore Presentation on the third Sunday of the month at 9 am ET on Hudson Valley Public Radio's JAZZ FM (and on the Internet at HVPR.ORG).

KEZW and the Glenn Miller Archive at the University of Colorado had presented the **Star Spangled Radio Hour** every Saturday night at 6pm until the end of 2015 and then it disappeared from the air waves. It seems that KEZW had a change of ownership. Hosts Rick Crandall and Dennis Spragg had introduced rare live big band radio broadcasts from the 30s and 40s each week. On December 19, they aired "Wings over the World" first heard over the NBC Blue Network on

August 4, 1943. The program came from the AAF Recreation Hangar at the Long Beach Army Air Base. Bing sang "Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer" and "Sunday, Monday or Always" plus a duet with Trudy Erwin on "People Will Say We're in Love". Following this, "Johnny Mercer's Chesterfield Music Shop" from July 27, 1944 was heard with Bing as guest.

We had been told that the broadcasts were to recommence, but only on the Internet. However as we went to press there was no sign of them. A sad loss!

As always, I must recommend Rich Conaty's long-running "**The Big Broadcast**" shows from New York on WFUV. Rich puts a musical spotlight on the classic sounds of the 1920s and '30s which of course includes Bing. It can be heard live on Sunday nights from 8pm-Midnight (ET) but you can listen again through the WFUV archives on the Internet. The station's web site includes these comments.

"The Big Broadcast was a pretty unusual show, content-wise, over 35 years ago. It's almost unique today," Conaty observes. "I haven't heard any other program that blends classic jazz with the pop vocals and dance bands of the same period."

"I'm pretty typical of the people who listen to my shows," says Rich. The music is "strictly one piece of the puzzle. It's important to keep some balance."

This may be why fans of The Big Broadcast are so loyal. At least one listener claims never to have missed a show in more than 22 years. And when Conaty left WFUV in December 1992 "to see if The Big Broadcast would succeed on a commercial outlet," his loyal listeners followed. Despite his success elsewhere, however, Conaty found the working environment in commercial radio to be less than ideal, and by July 1997 he was delighted to return to the station where it all began. "I think the experience polished my act, but also gave me a deeper appreciation for FUV," he says."

TV highlights - UK

Films and other items seen since our last issue was prepared were:

Discovering: Bing Crosby	Sky Arts
Happy Holidays with Bing and Frank	Channel5
High Society	TCM & Channel5
Holiday Inn	SkyChristmas
Let's Make Love	SkyDramarom
Road to Bali	ShowBiz TV
Robin and the 7 Hoods	TCM
Stagecoach	More4
The Country Girl	SkyDramarom
The Legendary Bing Crosby	Sky Arts
White Christmas	Channel4, Film4 & More4

Richard Baker was watching an edition of the quiz programme "University Challenge" at the end of

February and was amused by the following.

Question - You will hear three Academy Award winners for best original film song. What film was it and who was the composer?

The third item played was – “White Christmas”

Answer – It’s A Wonderful Life/ Bing Crosby

At least they made one connection!

UK radio

As already mentioned, Michael Feinstein was scheduled to celebrate Bing on March 18 on the prestigious and long running BBC Radio 2 programme “Friday Night Is Music Night”. If you missed it, you may still be able to catch it on the BBC’s i-player service. Full review in the next issue.

The National Presenters on BBC Radio2

The usual seasonal boost was seen in December with Bing popping up all over the place. Songs played of which we were aware over the last four months were:

Desmond Carrington: The Headless Horseman – White Christmas – True Love (February 12)

Clare Teal: It’s Been a Long, Long Time (November 8) – Little Jack Frost Get Lost (December 27) – Brother, Can You Spare a Dime? (January 24) – Exactly Like You (February 28)

Elaine Paige: White Christmas (December 20)

Don Black: Fancy Meeting You Here (January 17)

Chris Evans: Mele Kalikimaka (December 2) – White Christmas (December 15) – Mele Kalikimaka (December 21) – Little Drummer Boy / Peace on Earth (December 23) – White Christmas (December 24)

Steve Wright’s Sunday Love Songs: White Christmas (December 13) – True Love (December 13) – White Christmas (20/12)

Steve Wright in the Afternoon: White Christmas (December 22)

Ken Bruce: White Christmas (December 24)

Paul O’Grady - Christmas Day Special: Snow (December 25)

Vanessa Feltz: The Twelve Days of Christmas (December 14) – Busy Doing Nothing (December 16) – Santa Claus Is Comin’ to Town (December 18) – Little Drummer Boy / Peace on Earth (December 22)

Simon Mayo Drivetime: Little Drummer Boy / Peace on Earth (December 21)

Jeremy Vine: Snow (December 21)

Len Goodman: Dardanella (January 3)

Dermot O’Leary: Straight Down the Middle (January 9)

Madeley on Sunday: Well Did You Evah! (January 17) – True Love (January 31)

Barry Humphries: Barry’s Forgotten Musical Masterpieces: There’ll Be a Hot Time in the Town of Berlin (January 20)

Terry Wogan Special: Straight Down the Middle (January 31)

The Radio 2 Arts Show with Claudia Winkleman: Blue Room (January 29) – Try a Little Tenderness (February 5)

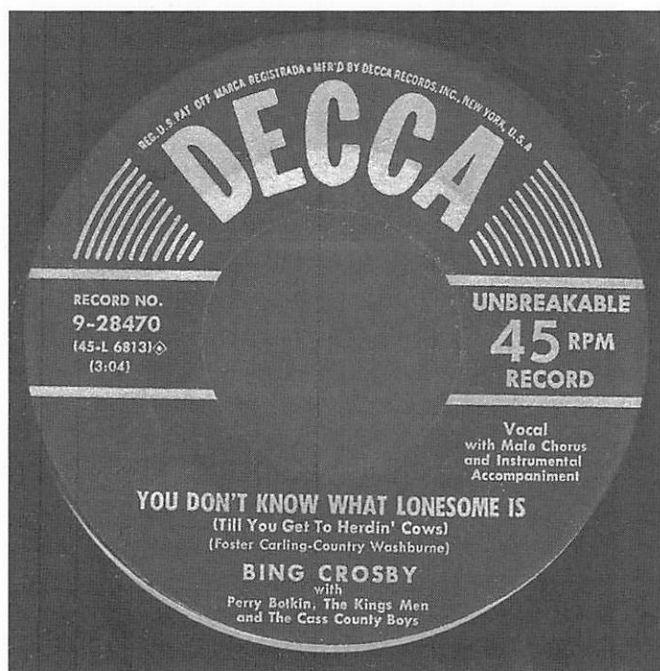
Pick of the Pops: True Love (February 6)

Sunday Night with Michael Ball: Swinging on a Star (February 28)

BBC Radio 4’s **Something Understood** programme on January 24 included “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” in its *Living with Poverty* episode. “Only Forever” was heard on **Inheritance Tracks** on BBC Radio4 Extra on February 28 with Petula Clark introducing it and saying it reminded her of her childhood. As a child, she thought the lyrics were “that pudding is mine” rather than “that’s putting it mild”.

The local radio presenters

Mark Forrest, who is based at BBC Radio Leeds, broadcasts between 7p.m. and 10 p.m. each night over all of the 39 local radio stations and he interviewed me on February 16th about fan clubs. Increasingly fans are using social media to follow their favourites and Mark was interested in the continuing existence of the ICC. We had a pleasant chat and I outlined the importance of our magazine when so many of our members do not have access to the Internet. I was also able to plug the two new CDs which were about to become available. Mark asked me to nominate a Bing song to be played and I suggested “True Love” as I knew that they had it available. I didn’t think they’d be able to find “You Don’t Know What Lonesome Is (Till You Git to Herdin’ Cows)”!



Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet at www.bbc.co.uk/radiocumbria) has again used plenty of Der Bingle’s songs in response to requests made on her Saturday night shows (10pm-midnight). Also she interviewed me about the ICC for her show on November 7 and it gave me the chance to reiterate that

the club is not closing down following our final Leeds meeting. In February, she interviewed ICC member Jason Liddiard who is looking to set-up regular Crosby meetings at his home near Warrington. Anne gave Jason's plans some very nice publicity.

In December, two of her shows had to be cancelled because of the local flooding emergencies but nevertheless Anne was able to play 34 tracks by the master. I'm always surprised by the diversity of songs played and this time we heard tracks such as "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" (with Dinah Shore), "Beautiful Memories", "I Wish I Were Aladdin", "Happy-Go-Lucky You" and "Sing Soft, Sing Sweet, Sing Gentle" (with Jimmy Durante).

Anne continues to welcome requests by email to anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk so email her if you want to hear Bing on the radio. She plays at least one for me every month. There's a "Listen again" facility for up to 28 days after the initial broadcast.

Bill Rennells *Harmony Night* show on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet always has plenty of Crosby. It's a three-hour broadcast starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings and he too has a "Listen Again" option. Our own Stan White keeps Bill busy with his Crosby requests having no less than nine songs used out of the total Der Bingle package of 22 tracks played during the period. Ian Lawrence chimed in with a couple of requests too. There's always a nice variety and we went from "On the Very First Day of the Year" through "Once in a While" (to mark the anniversary of Bing's passing) to "Johnny Doughboy Found a Rose in Ireland" from the Sepia AFRS CD. After playing "She Is the Sunshine of Virginia", Bill Rennells remarked "Best song on the programme."

Please join in and email Bill with your Bing requests to bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk and we will have even more Crosby on the air.

The Late Paul Barnes, the two-hour show hosted by Paul Barnes over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights has a regularly monthly segment featuring the 2013 Crosby calendar (the last one we issued). He plays the calendar song each time and usually adds another Crosby song or two on each occasion. Paul has excelled himself this time with not only his regular Calendar segments but other songs as well picking up the likes of "Little Ol' Tune", an amusing Crosby/Sinatra medley from a wartime broadcast and a TV medley with Jo Stafford. When he played "Jingle Bells" he talked about the fire which destroyed Bing's home in 1943. Always interesting stuff from Paul.

It is a lot easier to interrogate the BBC web site nowadays to see what Crosby songs have been played and the following have been heard on the local BBC radio stations. Most of these shows have a "listen again" facility.

Beverley Humphreys presents *Beverley's World of Music*: (BBC Radio Wales) Happy Holiday (December 25) – Swinging on a Star (December 25) – Count Your Blessings (January 10) – Love Walked In (January 24) – The Road to Morocco (January 24) – Pennies from Heaven (February 14) – It's Been a Long, Long Time (February 14)

Howard Leader: (Radio Lincolnshire) – Red Sails in the Sunset – Sugar (with Louis Armstrong). Howard may have played more Bing but we cannot obtain details.

John Bennett: (Radio Ulster) You Are My Sunshine (December 20) – You Made Me Love You (January 17) – True Love (January 31)

David Allen: (BBC Sussex) White Christmas (December 26) – It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas (December 26) – It's Been a Long, Long Time (January 2) – Day by Day (January 16)

Get It on with Bryan Burnett: (BBC Radio Scotland) Little Drummer Boy / Peace on Earth (December 25) – White Christmas (December 25)

Duncan Barks: (BBC Radio London) Mele Kalikimaka (December 24)

Owen Money – Money for Nothing: (BBC Radio Wales) Silent Night (December 19)

Mal Pope: (BBC Radio Wales) Mele Kalikimaka (December 19)

Neil Foster: (BBC Radio York) True Love (January 3) – Well, Did You Evah? (January 17) – True Love (January 17) – True Love (February 14) – Little One (February 28)

Roy Noble (BBC Wales): You Are My Sunshine (January 31)

Unforgettable with Bob Roberts (BBC Radio Solent) Thanks for the Memory – Where the Blue of the Night – Swinging on a Star (all on January 17)

Richard Spendlove: (BBC Radio Cambridgeshire) – White Christmas – The Old Lamplighter

Unforgettable with Gerald Jackson (BBC Radio Lancashire) – Moonlight Becomes You (February 14)

In our last issue, we gave details of the fire at the Angel Radio station in Havant, Hampshire. It is very pleasing to see that the station is up and running again and as before they are broadcasting a Bing radio show on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Go to www.angelradio.co.uk to listen online.

Australia

Graham Pascoe has reported that "White Christmas" was seen on one of the Pay-TV stations over the Christmas period.

John Funnell's "I've Heard That Song Before" from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. every Wednesday on WNY FM 88.9 features Hollywood and Broadway favourites. It includes Bing every week and the show can be heard

online at www.wynfm.org.au/. Previous shows can be accessed too.

The Golden Days community radio station on 95.7 FM in Victoria continues to have a half-hour programme at 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons called "On Air with Bing" which broadcasts a complete Bing Crosby radio show each week. This is presented by Bob Horsfall.

Other radio programmes featuring our man are Peter O'Brien's "Music Showcase" on Eastern FM 98.1 (Mondays 12 noon to 2 p.m.) Loris Young's show on 3WBC FM 94.1 (Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) has plenty of Crosby too.

Malcolm Macfarlane

macwilmslo@aol.com

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

David Bowie, the singer, songwriter, musician, record producer, painter and actor died on January 10 at the age of 69 after an 18-month battle with cancer. Widely considered by critics and other musicians as an innovator, particularly for his work in the 1970s, he was born David Robert Jones in south London. "Space Oddity" became his first top five entry in the UK after its release in July 1969. After a period of experimentation, he re-emerged in 1972 during the glam rock era with his flamboyant and androgynous alter ego Ziggy Stardust. The character was spearheaded by his single "Starman" and album *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*. The relatively short-lived Ziggy persona proved to be one facet of a career marked by reinvention, musical innovation and visual presentation.



In 1975, Bowie achieved his first major American crossover success with the number-one single "Fame" and the album *Young Americans*, which the singer

characterised as "plastic soul". The sound constituted a radical shift in style that initially alienated many of his UK devotees. He then confounded the expectations of both his record label and his American audiences by recording the electronic-inflected album *Low* (1977), the first of three collaborations with Brian Eno later known as the "Berlin Trilogy". *"Heroes"* (1977) and *Lodger* (1979) followed; each album reached the UK top five and received lasting critical praise. It was in 1977 of course that he guested on Bing's Christmas show and their duet of "Peace on Earth – Little Drummer Boy" reached No. 3 in the British Charts in 1982 and is a seasonal favourite on YouTube.

After uneven commercial success in the late 1970s, Bowie had UK number ones with the 1980 single "Ashes to Ashes", its parent album *Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)*, and "Under Pressure", a 1981 collaboration with Queen. He then reached a new commercial peak in 1983 with *Let's Dance*, which yielded several successful singles. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, Bowie continued to experiment with musical styles, including industrial and jungle. He also had a successful but sporadic film career. His acting roles include the eponymous character in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976), Major Celliers in *Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence* (1983), the Goblin King Jareth in *Labyrinth* (1986), Pontius Pilate in *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), and Nikola Tesla in *The Prestige* (2006), among other film and television appearances and cameos.

Bowie's impact on the nature of rock music was substantial and he changed his own approach repeatedly. During his career, he sold an estimated 140 million records worldwide. In the UK, he was awarded nine platinum album certifications, eleven gold and eight silver, and in the US received five platinum and seven gold certifications. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1996. Bowie stopped concert touring after 2004, and last performed live at a charity event in 2006. In 2013, he returned from a decade-long recording hiatus, remaining musically active until his death from liver cancer.

Terry Wogan, the much-loved UK broadcaster, passed away on January 31 at the age of 77. Sir Michael Terence "Terry" Wogan, KBE DL was an Irish radio and television broadcaster who worked for the BBC in the UK for most of his career. Before he retired from his BBC Radio 2 weekday breakfast programme *Wake Up to Wogan* in 2009, it had eight million regular listeners, making him the most listened-to radio broadcaster in Europe. Terry began his career on the Irish national broadcaster Raidió Teilifís Éireann where he presented shows such as *Jackpot* in the 1960s.

Wogan was a leading media personality in the UK from the late 1960s and was often referred to as a "national treasure". In addition to his weekday radio show, he was known for his work for television,

including the BBC One chat show *Wogan*, presenting *Children in Need*, the game show *Blankety Blank* and *Come Dancing* and as the BBC's commentator for the Eurovision Song Contest from 1971 to 2008. In recent times, Terry Wogan has been presenting a two-hour Sunday morning show, *Weekend Wogan*, on BBC Radio 2. He also hosted the Eurovision Song Contest 1998 in Birmingham along with Ulrika Jonsson. Wogan was granted a knighthood in 2005. He held dual British and Irish citizenship and was thus entitled to use "Sir" in front of his name.



Bing and Terry enjoy a joke about a particular disc

His first interaction with Bing came on July 22, 1975 when Mr. Crosby was interviewed on Terry's BBC Radio2 show. This is how it was described by Wogan in his book *Is It Me?* (pages 78/79).

When younger, Bing Crosby with his deceptively easy singing style and his similar gift on the big screen had been a great favourite of mine. I could never have dreamt of meeting him, as I queued for the one-and-nines, but I did. In the early seventies, he dropped in one morning on my radio show, and we chatted. He, too, was everything I knew he would be: full of *bonhomie* and good humour, relaxed and generous with his time.

As I recall [and, as you have noticed, my recollections can be a bit on the misty side], Bing was in London to record an album with Fred Astaire. The word had it that the recording was not going as swimmingly as it might: Astaire was a workaholic, meticulous in everything, as in his dancing: rehearse, refine, rehearse, let's do it one more time. Crosby's style was the antithesis of Astaire's: rely on your talent, do it on your

toes, wing it, let's go, I've got a golf date ...

Subsequently on August 4, Terry called in at the house Bing was renting at 3 Aubrey Rd., London W8, and interviewed him again for the BBC Radio 4 programme *Wogan's World*. The program was broadcast on September 7, 1975 at 6:15 p.m.

BBC Radio2 broadcast several tribute programmes on January 31 and one of these closed with a song from Terry's favourite musical film. It was Bing singing "True Love" from *High Society*.

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord returns to our pages with his fond memories of his friend Ken Barnes.

There was never a time during Bing's unparalleled career that he was inactive or away from the limelight. However, there was a period when his prolific output of recordings became less frequent. The resurgence of his collection of impressive releases (as we remember so well) came about due to the guidance and encouragement of our dear friend and inspired music producer, Ken Barnes.

It was Ken's visionary concept of a new Crosby era that brought about the last treasured collection of Crosbyana. As a companion theme to, "Where the Blue of the Night Meets the Gold of the Day", his collaborative ballad with Bing, Peter Dacre and Les Reed, "That's What Life Is All About", became a Crosby retrospective signature theme. Ken's musical imprint as a writer and collaborator was most impressive. In his humble and approachable manner he made countless friends and achieved a status in popular music that was uniquely his own.



(l to r) Pete Moore, Ken Barnes, Bing, Gord Atkinson and Rich Little at the January 1976 recording session.

It was at a 1976 Crosby recording date in Hollywood that I first met Ken. Bing had invited Rich Little and me to attend the session. It was on that occasion that we

were privileged to hear for the first time, a playback of 'At My Time of Life'. From that meeting our friendship and professional collaboration began. Later in London, at Ken's invitation, we were on hand for the final pressing of the Crosby classic.

In contrast to his professional demeanor Ken had a fun side to his personality that he often displayed. He was always a pleasure to be with and share amusing and revealing anecdotes about mutual acquaintances and the love of show business.

Two words come to mind when I think of Ken, thoughtful and considerate. In 1980, when Ken wrote and published his tribute book to Bing, 'The Crosby Years', he thoughtfully wrote to me to apologize for his book having the same title as my radio series. Such was the measure of the man and his concern for accuracy that he felt an explanation to me was necessary. I assured him that none was needed and that the title was applicable in both creative forms. After all, I reminded him, that when you produce an audio, video or book you give it to the world. Thankfully Bing is well remembered in all printed, audible and literary forms.



(l to r) Rich Little, Anne Barnes, Ken Barnes and Elaine Atkinson, outside St. Aloysius Church, Spokane during the centenary celebrations in 2003

Ken Barnes had a major and defining role in the last bountiful chapter of 'The Crosby Years'. Although as a music producer he worked with a stellar group of performers, including Fred Astaire, Peggy Lee, Jack Jones and Gene Kelly, his name will forever be linked to Bing.

Our heartfelt condolences to his dear wife and collaborator, Anne, with our warmest and happiest memories of the times we shared in London and at Gonzaga.

Gord Atkinson

THE WAY WE WERE

The section of the magazine where we look at what Bing was doing in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

On January 1st, 1916, Prohibition was introduced in the state of Washington. Bing's father became unemployed until early 1917 as his employer, Inland Brewery, was virtually put out of business. Eventually, Inland Brewery changed its name to Inland Products and they started to manufacture near-beer and vinegar and soon they added pickles and other products as well. Around this time, Bing (aged 12) is believed to have given his first public performance at the Parish Hall singing "Alice Ben Bolt," "One Fleeting Hour," and "What D'ye Mean You Lost Yer Dog?" (aka "My Dog Rover").

...But it was my mother, Kate Harrigan, who pushed, prodded and guided me into singing. There were seven of us children in the family, but mother used to say that I had a special gift - a talent - that should be developed and shared with the world.

When I was 10 she took me to a local voice teacher. I had exactly two lessons and quit. The teacher had me practicing nothing but scales. "Not for me," I said. Then Mother took over. She taught me two soggy, sentimental songs - "One Fleeting Hour" and "At the End of a Perfect Day". Mother made me practice until I knew the songs perfectly, then arranged for me to entertain at a local church affair. It was the first of many, many unpaid performances I gave around Spokane for the next few years.

It was rough, but after a while I started to enjoy the applause. I'd get upset if the audience didn't appreciate my singing.

(Bing, as quoted in a feature in the *National Enquirer*, April 22, 1973)

Years later, his mother recalled the Sunday nights when the family gathered around the piano.

"We had all the musical instruments and the whole family sang," she said. "Harry studied with a very good teacher for two years and sang in several concerts. That was when he was still in knee-pants and even then he had an outstanding voice. But we decided it was time to stop right then, if he was going to have a good voice later on."

(Lucie Neville, interviewing Bing's mother as reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 6, 1938)

75 YEARS AGO

During the first four months of 1941, Bing (aged 38) continued with his Kraft Music Hall shows and guests included Walter Pidgeon, Duke Ellington, Paul Robeson, Lew Ayres, Sabu, George Raft, Lionel Barrymore, Eddie Bracken, Bob Hope, Jack Teagarden, Don Ameche and Pat O'Brien amongst others. The dispute by the National Broadcasters' Association with ASCAP over royalties continued and during a ten-month period lasting from January 1 to October 29, 1941, no music licensed by ASCAP (1,250,000 songs) was broadcast on NBC and CBS radio stations.

Bing had been considering a divorce from Dixie because of her drinking and Dixie and Kitty Lang had been to Sun Valley, Idaho, to establish residency. A letter from Todd Johnson of Johnson and Johnson to Bing dated January 21, 1941 commenced as follows:

Jack O'Melveny informed me this morning that you had adjusted your domestic affairs so that you no longer contemplate a separation and property settlement with Dixie.

The letter set out the adverse effects a separation would have had on Bing's financial situation. Johnson estimated Bing's 1940 net income at \$526,000 and taxes would be \$377,000 as against \$433,000 if there had been a divorce. The letter also stated that Bing has cash in the bank outside of his personal account of \$167,000 with a tax bill due of \$377,000. A letter to Bing from Dixie's father, Evan Wyatt, written around this time, is supportive of Bing and urges him to have Dixie committed to a sanitarium. Wyatt's advice is to wait until "she is good and drunk" one night, then have her taken off, and to then put the necessary legal steps in place afterwards. The deal he offers Bing is that he will testify on Bing's behalf in any court hearing, providing Bing does not seek a custody order that would deny Dixie all access to the children. Wyatt seems resigned to having Dixie legally determined as incapable of looking after herself. Ultimately however, Bing decides to try to help Dixie through her problems.

A few days later, the Bing Crosby Pro-Am Golf Tournament at Rancho Santa Fe is won by Sam Snead for the third time. Bing missed the first day as he was delayed by bad weather in Los Angeles.

On March 12, *Variety* announced that in January, "Decca sold 446,700 copies of Bing Crosby recordings, a new high for all time, not only for Crosby but any disk artist. While figures for February are not available as yet, the same total or more seems likely, which can give the singer a sale of 5,000,000 records for the year as against a 3,500,000 sales last year."

Bing's film *Road to Zanzibar* was previewed at the Paramount Studio in March for the press and it has its New York premiere in April.

Paramount, which made a lot of money with *Road to Singapore*, ought to double the take with *Road to*

Zanzibar, for the new film is just about twice as good as the old one. Crosby and Hope were never better in their comedy interchanges.

(James Francis Crow, *Hollywood Citizen News* March 11, 1941)



On April 7, Bing appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine for the first time. Adolf Hitler was on the front cover the following week!

Also in April, Bing started filming *Birth of the Blues* with Mary Martin, Brian Donlevy, and Jack Teagarden. Harry Barris also had a small part. The movie had a budget of \$857,283. The director was Victor Schertzinger with musical supervision and direction by Robert Emmett Dolan.

50 YEARS AGO

Bing, now 63 years of age, was keeping busy with appearances on the *Hollywood Palace* show and guests included Gary Crosby, Nanette Fabray, Jackie Mason, David Frost, Rosemary Clooney, Edgar Bergen, and Tammy Grimes.

The Bing Crosby Pro-Am at Pebble Beach took place in January in good weather for a change and the professional winner was Don Massengale. Celebrities playing included John Raitt, Tennessee Ernie Ford, Dean Martin and Andy Williams. On Saturday, January 22 at 12 noon, Bing and Ray Bolger hosted an NBC television special called *The Road to Pebble Beach*. Television coverage of the golf was carried by NBC on January 22

and 23.

In February, Bing taped a television program called *The Road to Lebanon* at the NBC Studios in Burbank with Danny Thomas which was shown on NBC on April 20. Bing was unwell during the filming.

Danny Thomas managed to finish taping the fifth and last of his NBC specials despite the illnesses of his co-stars Bing Crosby and Bob Hope. Thomas had the famed pair signed up for a "Road to Lebanon" spoof, but he had to settle for a walk-on by Hope, who was battling the flu. Bing also tangled with the flu bug. He figured if the Batman couldn't beat it, neither could he: so he checked into St. Joseph's Hospital after the Thomas rehearsals. The hospital is next door to NBC and Bing found the accommodations so pleasant he returned the next night, instead of going to his hotel.

(Bob Thomas, *Associated Press*, February 18, 1966)



Bing and Danny Thomas revive the Pat-a-cake routine in *The Road to Lebanon*.

Whilst he was in Hollywood, El Bingo filmed a segment for a CBS-TV program *The Magic of Broadcasting* at Desilu Studios. John Scott Trotter, Diane Sherry, and Kerry McLane also took part. The show was transmitted on May 1.

On February 25, Bing and Kathryn flew to South Carolina where they stayed at Medway, an antebellum estate outside Charleston. They went on to Florida where Bing golfed and they attended the races at

Hialeah. Bing's long-timer friend, George Coleman, took them out on his new boat the *Aurora C*. March 3rd saw Bing attending the Flamingo Stakes at Hialeah Park, Miami and the race became controversial as it was run on a non-betting basis.

Then it was off to Toronto, Canada, for the *Easter Seal Show* (also known as *Timmy's Easter Parade of Stars*). The show was one of Canada's biggest show business charity shows and it aided Canada's handicapped children. The show was taped at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre before an audience of 1,200 and was screened on March 27.

...As the show was being taped, it was a start and stop affair. This made it all the more interesting for, between numbers when the tape was stopped, Bing was on stage, talking casually to the audience, the technicians, the performers, and lending a hand whenever he saw the need. We were particularly impressed by his never-failing patience, friendliness and good humour throughout the entire show.

...Bing opened the show with his own terrific version of "Red Red Robin", and the show was off to a happy start, most of the performers on the show were Canadian, which, Bing said, was "as it should be," but besides emceeing the show, Bing managed to get in four songs, each of which had its own special appeal, and all were well-chosen to fit the occasion.

At one point in the show, Bing had a chat with "Timmy" who asked Bing if he would have time to meet some of his little crippled friends. Bing said he most certainly would and then did a very appealing version of "Swinging on a Star" with Timmy and his friends. Bing is always so good with children. You can just imagine the scene as Bing looked round at each of the children and smiled saying: "Well, this is the biggest group I've worked with since I sang with the Fred Waring Pennsylvanians."

Just about the happiest moment in the show came when Bing introduced "A young lady who's very special to me—because she keeps my sons out of my golfing equipment, fishing tackle and shot guns—my wife Kathryn." It had been Bing's idea to bring Kathryn along to appear on the show and her appearance just made it complete. The audience was clearly delighted to see her. Kathryn came on stage smiling. She is very sweet and friendly, and looked so beautiful in a pink fur-trimmed gown, with a short full skirt, and very stylish white lace hose.

...Bing then introduced Toronto's own Juliette—my favourite female vocalist if I may say so here. Glamorous Juliette has been charming her fellow Canadians with her lovely songs and warm personality on her own weekly show for many years and it was a real treat to see my two favourites together.

Juliette expressed her genuine pleasure at meeting Bing. "You know," she said, "Like every other female vocalist, I've often wondered if I would ever have a chance to stand right beside you and sing a duet with you." "I thought you'd never ask me," said Bing, as the orchestra struck up "Easter Parade". This produced one of the most delightful moments in the show. The words of the song had been changed slightly to fit the occasion—and this must have been somewhat confusing, though Bing wasn't using the cue card. But in the second chorus, when he was supposed to sing "I'll be all in clover", the words eluded Bing and unable to pick up the place on the cue card, he came in, like the pro that he is, in perfect tune and time, with the surprising words—"I can't see the next line." Juliette, quite a pro herself, quickly filled him in and not a note was missed. A most delightful duet, with a special added dash of true Crosbyanna.

Something very amusing happened as Bing was about to do his closing song. The orchestra went into the introduction too soon and Bing didn't quite make it to centre stage on time. "You'd better give me that intro again, Lucio," called Bing. The orchestra, hidden behind the curtains for this number, must have been completely thrown. All was silent for so long that Bing finally walked over and put his ear to

the curtain, calling out "Hello-o-o there. Is anybody there?" And then to the audience: "I think they've all gone home." But soon the orchestra started the song again and Bing, seated on a stool, alone in the spotlight at centre stage, closed the show with his own unforgettable version of "The Men in My Little Girl's Life". Bing does this song so well that it is really regrettable that he has not made a recording of it for general release.

(Lillian Potter, writing in BINGANG magazine, December 1966)

On April 13th, 1966, *Cinerama's Russian Adventure* premiered at the New York Warner Cinerama Theatre. Bing appeared briefly in this and then narrated this Cinerama tour of Russian culture and geography produced by the Russians and released under the auspices of the Cultural Exchange Program. The original narrator was Homer McCoy but he was replaced by Bing in this reedited release.

Bing Crosby, who handles the narration and appears briefly in the beginning to introduce the picture, turns in a first rate job, easily projecting an affable aura around the entire production.

(*Variety*, April 6, 1966)

KEEPING TRACK

Richard Baker looks at the new releases

Quite a bit of ground to cover this time around, but a little unbalanced, because search as I might, I can find nothing of importance to bring you on the DVD /Blu-Ray front.

COMPACT DISCS

We start off with two very nice offerings from our old friends at Sepia and JSP Records, both of which have benefitted from major input from members of the ICC, and Malcolm Macfarlane has written the notes for both.

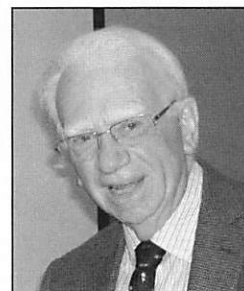
Bing Crosby - Good & Rare – Vol. 3 - Sepia 1296

Price around £8 (UK) around \$13 (US). ICC Members should use the order form sent with this issue to benefit from the member's advantageous offer

1. Ol' Man River (take 3)* / 2. Poor Little G-String (film recording) / 3. Song of the Dawn, (take 1)* / 4. A Bench in the Park (radio) / 5. Everything's Agreed Upon (radio) / 6. After Sundown (take B)* / 7. Let Me Call You Sweetheart, (take B)* / 8. Red Sails in the Sunset, (take B)* / 9. It's Easy to Remember (film recording) / 10. The Moon Got in My Eyes** / 11. All You Want to Do Is Dance** / 12. Laugh and Call It Love** / 13. Laugh and Call It Love (2nd version)** / 14. Where Is Central Park?** / 15. Beware (I'm Beginning to Care)** / 16. East Side of Heaven** / 17. Sing a Song of Sunbeams** / 18. When the Moon Comes over Madison Square** / 19. Duke the Spook / 20. Song of the Seventh Air Force / 21. Song of the Fifth Marines / 22. Night and Day (fluff) / 23. The Blue Room * / 24. Cheek to Cheek* / 25. Mountain Greenery*.

* = Alternates to tracks previously issued on CD

**=Demonstration recordings with rhythm accompaniment



Record collectors become used to superlatives - "The Best Of", "The Very Best of" and even "The Ultimate -

- " are frequently used (and abused), but here "Good & Rare" fits the need correctly and precisely. It's good because it covers a long period showing Bing's changing approach to his craft from 1928 to 1956, includes some hitherto un-revealed alternate takes, has a wide range covering studio recordings, demonstration piece, radio, and morale-raising items, and at the same time is entertaining and instructive. And Rare - some of these tracks are from very rare, possibly unique, originals. Some have not seen the light of day in any form. A few have appeared on now hard to find LPs many years ago, and I think just three previously on "difficult" CDs. It is also essential for those who carefully collected the "Chronological" series from Jonzo, because that set, once thought to be as complete as possible, has been found to have some gaps, filled here. It is remarkable that all these years on, new things are still being found and identified.



I think I must mention, particularly in the light of my enthusiasm, that I have been involved in the preparation of the issue, but only to assist in identifying differences in the alternate takes. I was not involved in the selection of the material and do not think I am compromised in any way. On the matter of the differences in takes, Malcolm has asked me to mention an error in the notes. The difference between takes on "The Blue Room" is at 1 minute 37 seconds, not 2:20 (the total length of the track). After working through the alternate takes, a thought struck me: we attempt to identify the "easy to describe" differences - the variation in a word, or the changes in a sequence of notes, but in each of the pairings of "Song of the Dawn", "After Sundown", "Let Me Call You Sweetheart", and "Red Sails in the Sunset", there is another less easily identifiable difference, even though they span five years and include a Whiteman recording. In each case, on one of the takes Bing phrases his words in such a way that there is a very slight elongation of the words, with a compensating reduction in the gap between the words. Played simultaneously as a

"stereo pair", you hear Bing in one channel getting slightly behind his alter ego in the other channel, only to catch up again. The overall rhythm is always maintained. The differences are very slight and rarely identifiable on their own, but as it occurs so consistently I cannot help but wonder if it was a deliberate attempt to offer a real alternative - to change the feeling within the song - rather than merely to improve on precisely the same performance across the takes.

Inevitably some of the tracks are a little noisy, having been taken from very old delicate originals, but again Sepia have worked wonders at getting rid of much of it. Some of the originals were very poor. What we have on the finished product is of good entertainment value.

The demonstration tracks are a true delight, with Bing in light hearted mood, though struggling a little here and there with material that was clearly new to him (a couple of which did not make it to film). To my mind they are a precursor of the CBS radio tracks of some 20 years later with the Buddy Cole group. Listen to "Sing a Song of Sunbeams" for example and you will be bowled over by the lightness of Bing's touch. He comments on several of the songs in betting parlance - the sentiment comes over but ideas on what precisely he means are welcome! We then have a group of songs aimed directly at specific units of the armed forces as morale boosters. (Bing was doing his bit too). The last three items are alternate takes of three songs from the "Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings" album that appeared on an Australian pressing of the Verve LP.

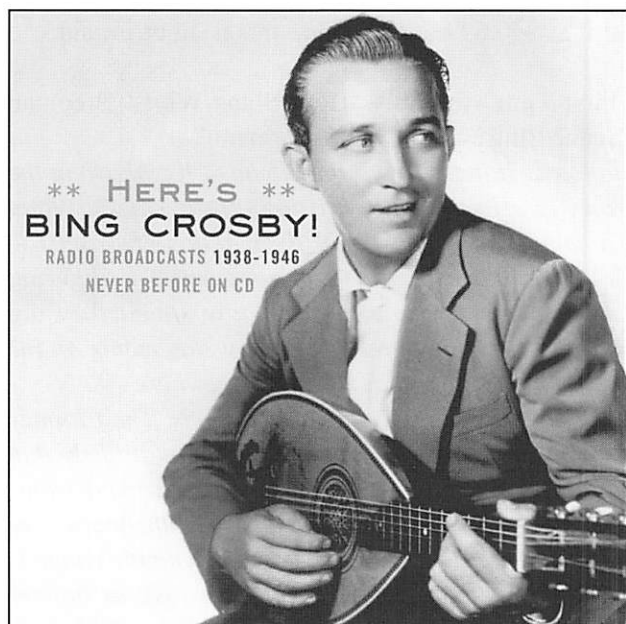
You will not find Bing's best known output here. It is a CD for careful listening. A lot can be learned. But it entertains too. It goes on my easy access shelf.

Here's Bing Crosby! - JSP Records – JSP6705

Price around £12 (UK), USA price still awaited. ICC Members should use the order form sent with this issue to benefit from the member's advantageous offer.

1. Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree (With Anyone Else But Me) (June 4, 1942) ("Here's Bing Crosby" intro) / 2. I Can Dream, Can't I? (April 7, 1938) / 3. Lovelight in the Starlight (June 30, 1938) / 4. Long, Long Ago (November 10, 1938) / 5. If I Didn't Care (May 18, 1939) / 6. What Can I Say (After I Say I'm Sorry) (April 6, 1939) / 7. Wishing (Will Make It So) (May 18, 1939) / 8. When You Were Sweet Sixteen (May 18, 1939) / 9. Sunday (March 7, 1940) / 10. Love's Old Sweet Song (February 1, 1940) / 11. Little Girl (April 4, 1940) / 12. Juanita (June 20, 1940) / 13. I Can't Love You Any More (Any More Than I Do) (June 6, 1940) / 14. When I Grow Too Old to Dream

(July 11, 1940) / 15. Six Lessons from Madame La Zonga (July 25, 1940) / 16. Oh! Susannah (February 20, 1941) / 17. Oh! Look at Me Now (with Connee Boswell) (January 30, 1941) / 18. In The Gloaming (July 3, 1941) / 19. Yours (June 19, 1941) / 20. Why Don't We Do This More Often? (November 13, 1941) / 21. I Remember You (April 30, 1942) / 22. Daybreak (November 5, 1942) / 23. I've Got a Gal in Kalamazoo (October 1, 1942) / 24. My Devotion (October 29, 1942) / 25. Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition! (October 29, 1942) / 26. Taking a Chance on Love (March 18, 1943) / 27. A Lot in Common with You (with Marilyn Maxwell) (February 17, 1944) / 28. How Many Hearts Have You Broken? (November 23, 1944) / 29. Tangerine (May 17, 1945) / 30. One More Dream (March 21, 1946) / 31. Oh! What It Seemed To Be (March 28, 1946) / 32. I'll Never Smile Again (July 11, 1940) (and sign off)



Those who have listened to many of the KMH broadcasts will be familiar with the introduction that forms the title to this CD. It appears here at the opening, as does the usual "sign off" with Bing telling what next week has in store. It leaves me wanting to "tune in"! In between there are no less than 32 songs drawn from the KMH broadcasts from 1938 to 1946 in roughly chronological order, the first and last excepted. The selection is chosen deliberately from titles that Bing did not record for commercial release. We have all emotions from the wistful "Wishing Will Make It So" to the bouncy "Don't Sit under the Apple Tree", the romantic, the nostalgic, and everything in between. Bing is joined by a couple of his singing partners of the era to good effect and there are some songs that were hits in other hands which produce interesting comparisons for those who might be familiar with such as "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree" as performed by Glenn Miller, and "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition" in Kay Kyser's recording, to name but two. Bing actually

mentions Bob Eberly's "Tangerine" and in an example of the asides that occur from time to time describes a tangerine as an orange not quite up to naval standards! Again, inevitably there is the occasional bit of surface noise but it is not intrusive. I think that most fans will be delighted with the issue and it is particularly important for those who have an interest in the Kraft Music Hall broadcasts. Why some of these were not recorded for commercial release is beyond me. They are fully up to the standards of a number of the commercial issues, and much better than some.

WEIHNACHTEN (Helene Fischer) - Polydor Double CD (also on vinyl LP)

Price around £23 (UK) Around \$28 (US)

"White Christmas" (Dubbed duet with Bing).

My attention was drawn to this issue by several fans just a fraction late to mention in time for Christmas in the last issue of BING, but Dieter got in first. "Weihnachten" translates literally as "Christmas". Helene Fischer is a major star in Germany and Austria and appears to have a good following elsewhere in continental Europe but is new to me. Here we have a two CD set, the first of which covers traditional German Christmas songs, "Stille Nacht" and "O Tannenbaum" among them. The second has popular Christmas songs in English. All are accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra but there are several dubbings of major singers, including Bing, (and Frank) to make artificial duets. I presume this might be a ploy to gain acceptance in the English speaking world. Bing's, inevitably, is of "White Christmas". This has of course been done before. This is possibly among the more tasteful though I am personally unpersuaded. Helene has a pleasant voice and a good presence. A video version is at present on YouTube, and there is also a DVD of a concert that includes the duet. Prices noted are the lower end of those found but I have seen wild variations.

I'm Hummin' I'm Whistlin' I'm Singing 1931-1936 - Halcyon Records (UK)

Price around £8:70 (UK) around \$23 (US).

1. Out Of Nowhere / 2. Now That You're Gone / 3. Love, You Funny Thing! / 4. You're Still in My Heart / 5. Let's Try Again / 6. I'm Playing with Fire / 7. What Do I Care, It's Home! / 8. I've Got to Pass Your House to Get to My House / 9. I Would If I Could But I Can't / 10. Let's Spend an Evening at Home / 11. I'm Hummin' - I'm Whistlin' - I'm Singin' / 12. Someday, Sweetheart / 13. Two Cigarettes in the Dark / 14. It's Easy to Remember / 15. My Heart

and I / 16. Moonburn / 17. Lovely Lady / 18. Let's Call a Heart a Heart / 19. South Sea Island Magic / 20. I Never Realized

Promised for issue on March 18th, this is billed as "Including some of his rarer recordings". In fact the titles are reasonably familiar and not too difficult to find but at least the issue does not follow the option so frequently followed of recycling the best known songs, so in that sense the description is partly true. I am assuming here that the recordings used are those on "normal" releases and do not disguise anything special in the way of alternates, demos, or the like. Halcyon have done good things in the past and those who need to fill these particular gaps would probably not be disappointed.

Seven Classic Albums - Real Gone Music

Price around £8:50 (UK). At the time of writing Amazon US list it at \$40.62 but I feel sure this is an error and others in the series are typically under \$16.

"Some Fine Old Chestnuts", "Songs I Wish I Had Sung the First Time Around", "Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings", "Bing with a Beat", "Fancy Meeting You Here", "El Senor Bing" and "Bing & Satchmo"

Described as a box set, this actually comes in a quadruple crystal case. It includes all the albums I list above in the original versions (not the extended "DeLuxe" versions where they exist) so I am not listing all the tracks. "Real Gone Music" have now issued dozens of sets in which they take a number of albums, pack them at up to two per CD into multiple six to eight album sets and issue them with covers with standardized monochrome artwork, differing only in the photo of the chosen star. No supporting information is given whatsoever. Bluntly stated they are exemplars of the "pile it high and sell it cheap" philosophy, and I will readily agree with many statements on the internet that around \$2 per album sounds like a bargain. But possibly something has to give somewhere - - .

I have not heard the current set but I do have the Rosemary Clooney issue, covering eight albums. The Clooney set includes "Fancy Meeting You Here" which is also included in the current Crosby issue and I think it likely that the identical tracks will have been used. I have therefore re-visited them and undertaken some detailed comparisons, both aural and by visual observation of the spectrum at chosen points. Real Gone Music boast that the tracks are "digitally remastered" but that could mean virtually anything. What I have discovered is that the dynamic range is much reduced, which has allowed mastering at a much higher overall volume. Some subtlety is lost, as quieter passages are relatively "loud". Superficially it sounds clearer particularly when played in noisy surroundings but after a while it sounds artificial and forced. The frequency range also appears curtailed, lacking the life imparted by "clean" highs and the weight from lower frequencies. Sibilants are "fluffy" rather than sizzling. I much prefer the originals or the official CD re-issues (though the set might have advantages in the car where road noise is otherwise a problem). Those desperate to fill a gap at minimal cost might grab the bargain but if you think good audio quality is important you could be disappointed. Many user's reviews for the series on the internet give high marks but those usually seem to be based on the low cost only. Adverse comments about sound quality exist on a number of music forums. The purchase of all the albums in their "official" guise is much more costly but with the most obvious alternatives (the "DeLuxe" versions from UMG produced under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises) you get many additional interesting tracks as well as superior sound, good presentation and informative notes.

Other issues.

At \$14:99 Amazon (US) list a series of CD-Rs (recordable to order) produced by Kipepeo Publishing under the title "Early Years Collection" which has so far reached volume 3. They feature Bing as a soloist and oddly they are assembled in alphabetical order with Volume 3 reaching "Just a Gigolo". Alternate takes are included. Take the Chronological series up to around 1932, omit titles with Whiteman and The Rhythm Boys, reshuffle into alphabetical order, and this is what you would have.

Japanese imports of "Some Fine Old Chestnuts" have appeared on several British and American websites bearing similar artwork to an earlier (1993) issue, which merely contained the 12 tracks from the original LP. The recordings are however identical to those in the "DeLuxe" issue of 2014 from UMG with 23 tracks, which is still available. The Japanese import comes at a price some three times (or more) greater than the UMG issue in both Britain and America. Some websites give a publication date of 1993 (which of course relates to the original shorter version).

Keith Richmond has drawn attention to an eight CD set from Mosaic titled "**Complete Commodore & Decca Eddie Condon & Bud Freeman Sessions**". Among its 199 tracks are the four tracks (three titles) recorded with Bing on January 16, 1946 - W73278-A "Blue [And Broken Hearted]", W73279-A and Alternate #1 "After You've Gone" and W73280-A "Personality".

These recordings are available elsewhere and all four are on JONZO JZCD-41 - "The Chronological Bing

Crosby Volume 41". However what is of real interest are the notes accompanying the issue, where the discographical listing states that there were a number of alternate takes that I am fairly sure have not been shown in any earlier discography. They are shown as W73279-BD "After You've Gone" (unissued), W73279-alt #2 "After You've Gone" (unissued), and W73280-alt "Personality" (unissued). The notes refer to the CD set containing tracks appearing for the first time, hitherto unissued that Mosaic had recovered from the Decca vaults. The non-inclusion of the particular alternates with Bing must indicate that they are not still there. But there is possibly a slim chance that we might, just might, see them surfacing someday. This was an interesting period in the Crosby story. Decca was pairing Bing with a number of its stars aside from his more regular pairings. Within a short period he recorded songs accompanied by the Lehman Engel, Eddie Heywood, Jimmy Dorsey, Bob Haggart, Camarata, Lionel Hampton, Eddie Condon and Jay Blackton Orchestras, representing considerable variations in style, with some being outright jazzmen.

DVD and BLU-RAY

"Here Come the Waves" is slated for a new issue by Simply Media on June 6th in UK for Region 2. Prices are shown as around £12. The highlight is of course "Ac-Cen-Tchu-Ate the Positive".

At this time I regret I have nothing else to report under this heading.

The Internet

Little Boy Lost - Free to stream for subscribers to Amazon Prime US.



One of the things that has long puzzled me is why the film *Little Boy Lost* of 1953 is seen so infrequently. It is rarely shown on TV and I don't think it is available on DVD. (There is a film of the same title made in 1978 which is of a totally different story). Possibly it suffered because it came between *Road to Bali* and *White Christmas*. Perhaps it is overlooked because of lack of co-stars of major international weight, though Bing alone had strong pulling power. Or maybe it is because the songs were not amongst Bing's major hits (there are no "big ballads"). Instead there are what might reasonably be described as songs directed at children, mainly in French. But that is not the point - the film is dramatic and pulls at the heartstrings. *The Country Girl* of the following year is often mentioned as Bing's major dramatic role. But here in *Little*

Boy Lost we have drama a-plenty, with Bing as an American war correspondent in France searching in the aftermath of the war for his lost son, after his wife is killed. And when found, is the child the correct one? But subscribers to Amazon Prime in the US now have the opportunity of seeing it again, via supported devices. Very many thanks to Alice Kane for drawing attention to it. An interesting sidelight is that Bing's first wife died during the making of the movie. Did it affect his performance? Is there added poignancy for the viewer in knowing that? The film should be on DVD, but in the meantime subscribers to Amazon Prime can enjoy it.

A series of "virtual CDs" for download have appeared on internet sites, including Amazon, produced by "JazzAge" and giving a copyright of "Salt & Pepper" with various titles which include the words "Early Bing" including for example "Magnolia - Early Bing 1926 - 1927". They appear to me to replicate much of what was included in the "Chronological" series from Jonzo, at greater cost, reduced content and with some omissions. So far as I can currently establish there are 14 such "virtual" CDs going up to 1934. In my view those interested would do much better getting the Jonzo "Chronological Crosby" CDs with the benefit of the physical CD and the copious and informative notes. The Jonzos are also are also more complete.

Now for a touch of the weird. Amazon US are advertising a series of TV shows available to watch via Amazon Prime called "Dead Famous" described as "*A spirited trip through America in search of the spirits of the dead famous. We take to the road to investigate alleged sightings and hauntings by ghosts believed to be that of famous legends of the stage and screen such as Janis Joplin, Bing Crosby, and Clark Gable. They talk to the people who witnessed ghostly contact first hand, and reveal facts about the celebrities and their favorite haunts.*" That specifically covering Bing

(number 4 in the series) adds *"Chris Fleming and Gail Porter visit theaters where sightings of Bing Crosby's ghost have been reported, to see if the singing legend's spirit is still waiting in the wings."*

To make things even weirder, Ghosts - or gremlins - have obviously got into Amazon's system as at the time of writing, the series is shown as having first aired on February 5th 2036. I will not bother, particularly if the wait has to be until 2036.

Seen on eBay - Gary Crosby's high chair tray. Described as *"This high chair tray bought and specifically personalized for Bing Crosby and Dixie Lee's son Gary Evan Crosby, who was born in June 1933. It is made by Reed & Barton, Silver Plate stamped with an item #230L. Has been repaired somewhere along its lifetime on the underside. It has "Gary Evan Crosby" engraved into the top surface, along with "The Three Teddy Bears" pictorial story engraving"*. It was originally offered at \$2699, but there were no bidders. It has since re-appeared at an opening price of \$3299. The repair mentioned seems from the photos to be rather crude.

Also seen on the internet was a "virtual CD" available for download with many of the songs we know and love, performed by one **Bill** Crosby. A fit companion no doubt for a similar issue from Bing **Cosby**. Obviously very great care went into producing those items.

I am grateful for the few comments received about my piece on downloads and streaming. I am fully aware that it did not cover all possible sources. Some are provided directly by internet service providers. My aim was to give some idea of the range and type of service available. Despite the easy usage of internet resources by some, others remain a little hesitant. I was really making the point that if the right precautions are taken there is no need for such hesitancy, and pointing possible "newbies" in the direction of some of the better known providers.

Richard Baker

bakerstonb@gmail.com

DUBLIN AUCTION OF UNPUBLISHED BING CROSBY GOLFING PHOTOGRAPHS

Whyte's Auctioneers, Dublin, will auction previously unpublished photographs of Bing playing golf - and playing to the gallery - in Ireland in 1961.

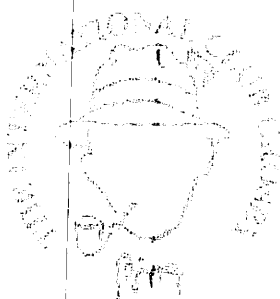
The six pictures taken at Woodbrook Golf Club near Dublin, show Bing's initial displeasure and then enjoyable antics after his ball lands in the rough. The sixth photo shows his skilled escape, with the camera catching the ball in the air. Among the very few action photographs of the event, they will be presented in a frame about four feet wide with captions at Whyte's "Eclectic Collector" auction on May 14th, 2016.

The occasion was a charity match watched by more than 4,000 spectators on Sunday, September 17th, 1961.

David Shanks was the photographer and was allowed stand within a few feet of Bing. Crosby's partner was Harry Bradshaw, Irish champion. They played the US ambassador to Ireland Grant Stockdale and another Irish professional Christy Greene. The game, in aid of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, was declared "a tie"; Lady Killanin, the society's president, presented Waterford Glass and Irish whiskey to all four players.

From the clubhouse balcony, Bing sang "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling", "Galway Bay" and "White Christmas". It was the first of several visits by the old groaner to Ireland.

Whyte's, at 38 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2, Ireland, can be contacted at: info@whytes.ie or 00353 1 6762888. Whyte's will be putting a catalogue, including pictures of the framed set of photographs, on its website in mid April: whytes.ie or whytes.com



Bing Crosby
Hollywood

July 7, 1949

Mr Lew Brott
30 North Judson Street
Gloversville, New York

Dear Lew:

Thank you for your letter depicting the rent situation in Gloversville, and indicating your very broadminded handling of this condition. You are definitely a man whose approach to the problems of life deserve universal applause.

I am not surprised to learn that in the old days Sam Goldwyn was always shy in the ante. Since he's been in the picture business his conduct indicates he is definitely a tender man with a dollar.

My warmest regards to yourself, and thank you for the picture and the letter.

Sincerely yours,

Bing Crosby

DIRECTORS
BING CROSBY
KENT ALLEN
C. S. HOWARD
PAT O'BRIEN
W. A. GUNLEY



DEL MAR

CALIFORNIA

August 29, 1939

OFFICERS
BING CROSBY
PRESIDENT
PAT O'BRIEN
VICE PRESIDENT
W. A. GUNLEY
SECRETARY
W. F. TURNER
TREASURER
ADAMSON, MANAGER

Mr. Dick Klein
Paramount Gymnasium
Paramount Studios
Hollywood, California

Dear Dick:

Would you send me as soon as possible a couple of the rubber exercise gadgets that you furnished me with before.

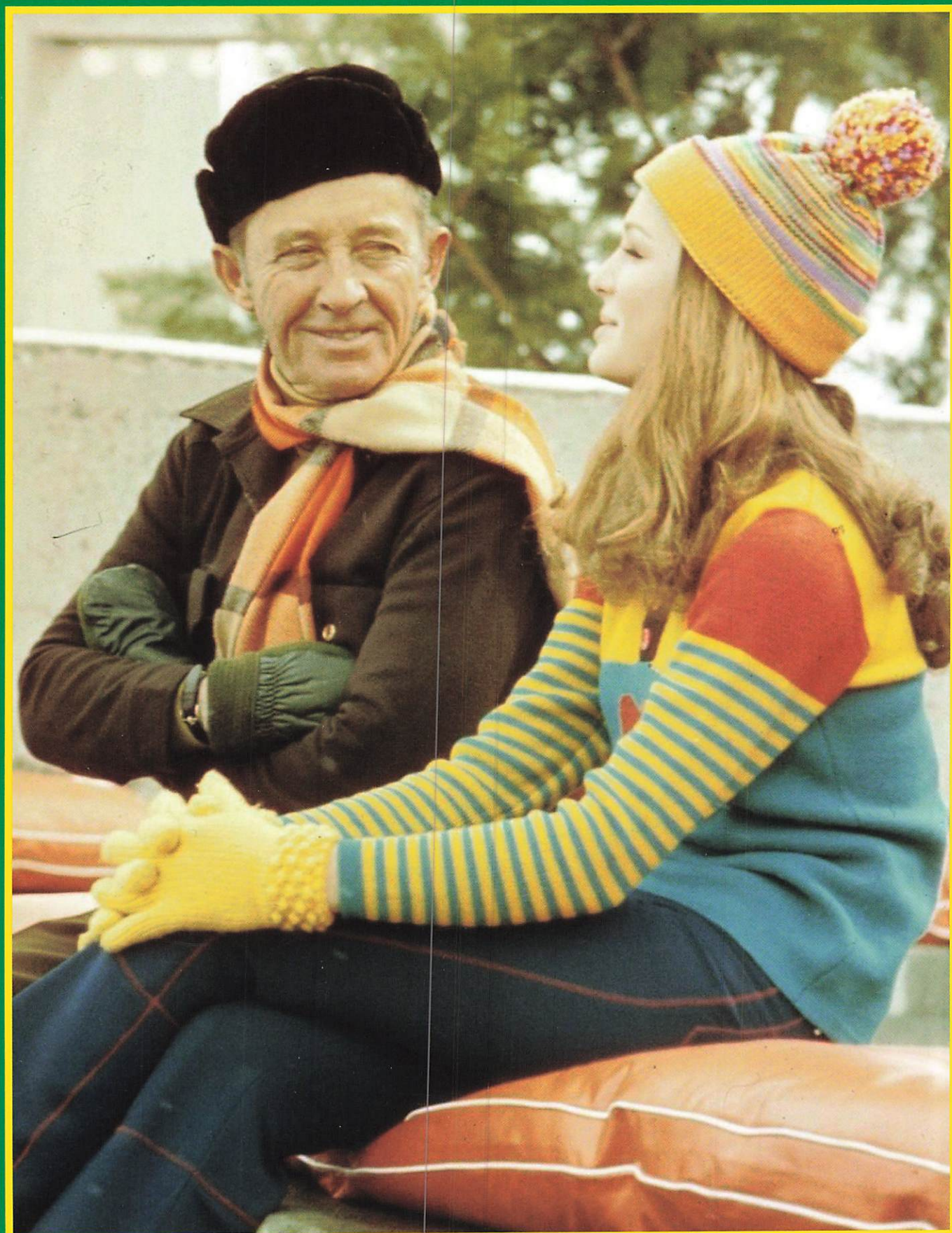
I would appreciate getting these before the end of the week, as I leave here on Monday. Just address them to Rancho Santa Fe, California, and I will pay you for them when I see you at the studio.

Thanks.

Sincerely,

Bing Crosby

BC:ms



Designed & printed by dh3 digital
Email: dh3@live.com